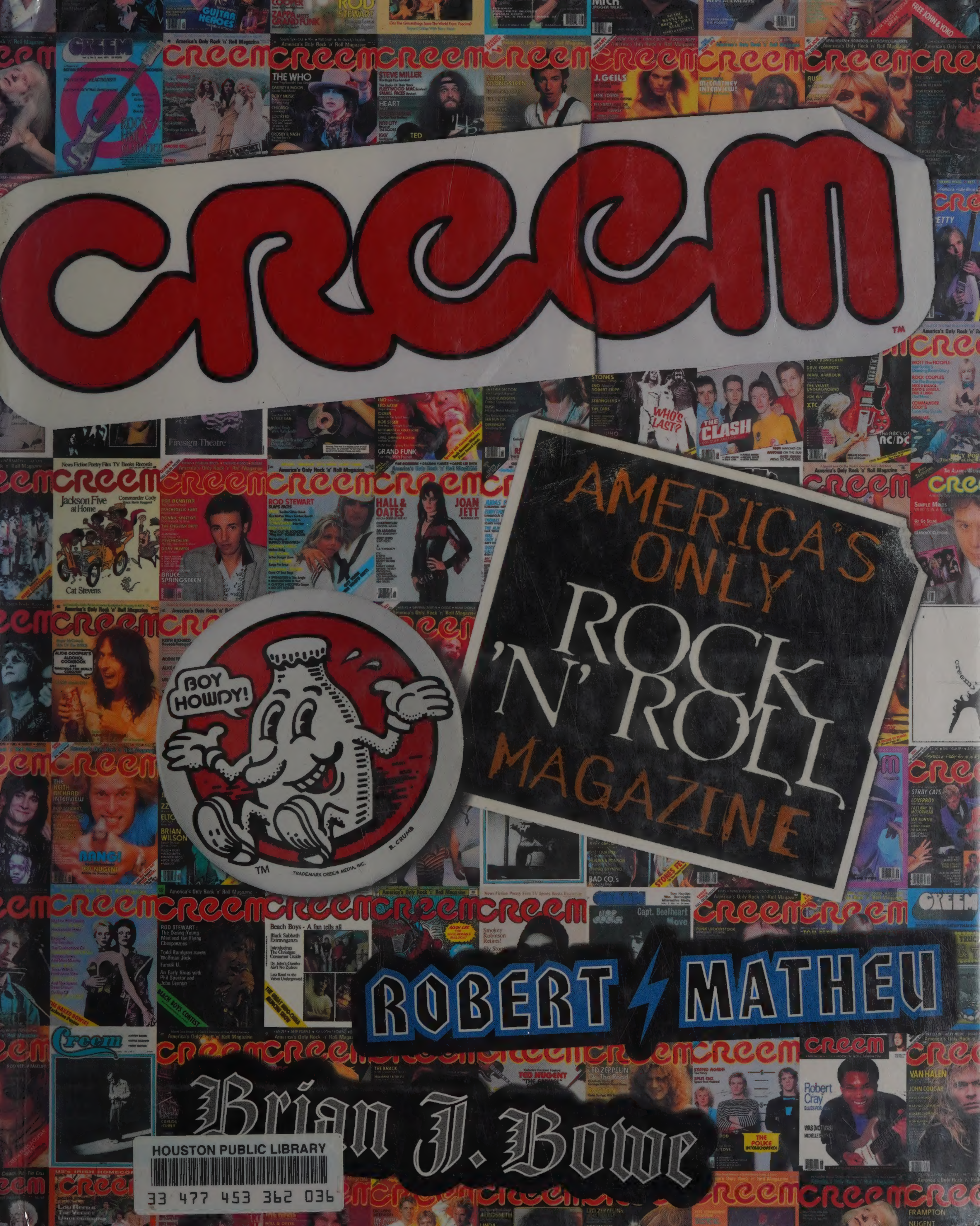
BOY HOWDY!
R. CRUMB
TM TRADEMARK CREEM MEDIA, INC.

# CREEM™

## AMERICA'S ONLY ROCK 'N' ROLL MAGAZINE

**ROBERT MATHEU**

**Brian J. Bowe**

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"My entire life and career has been influenced by those early years of CREEM. It sucked me deeper into rock 'n' roll both musically and culturally. The writing was passionate and dug deep. No surface shit here. The photography put you in the first row, back stage and on the road. And if you closed your eyes, you could just imagine the music itself."
—**John Varvatos,** Fashion Rock Star

**Sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll—
all without the hangover**

With raw photographs of rock's greatest stars and insightful prose by the legendary rock journalists who were stars in their own right, CREEM magazine stood at the forefront of youth counterculture from 1969 to 1988 as "America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine." A product of Detroit's revolutionary counterculture, CREEM cultivated an incredibly gifted staff of iconoclastic scribes, editors, photographers, and graphic artists whose work continues to resonate today, including: Lester Bangs, Dave Marsh, Richard Meltzer, Nick Tosches, and a not-so-famous Cameron Crowe. They invented a raucous new form of journalism, where the writing and photographs were as much an expression of rock 'n' roll as the music itself. CREEM embraced and abused the best and the worst of the era: MC5, Led Zeppelin, the Rolling Stones, the Faces, Lou Reed, the Stooges, T.Rex, Kiss, Mott the Hoople, the Who, the New York Dolls, Bob Seger, Ted Nugent, Aerosmith, the Ramones, Cheap Trick, the Clash, and Van Halen, among many others.

Now the Mouth of the Motor City presents a retrospective of the beautiful haze that was rock's golden age—from the end of the hippie days through glam and punk and into '80s metal. Featuring the best of the magazine's vast archives of photos, illustrations, and articles, CREEM is the authentic rock 'n' roll experience—written for fanatics by fanatics.

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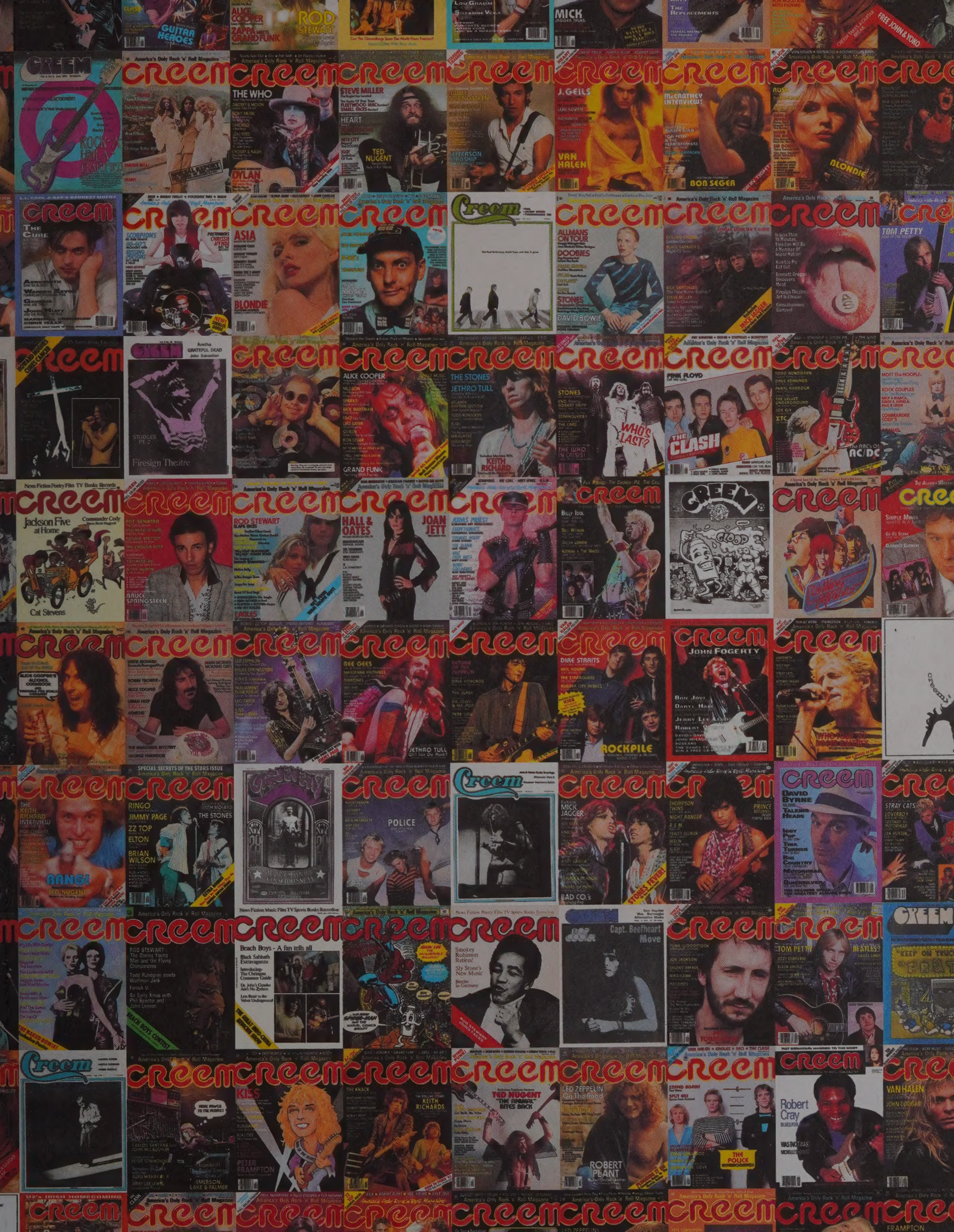
CREEM
America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine
GUITAR HEROES
ALICE COOPER
ZAPPA
GRAND FUNK
ROD STEWART
LOU GRAMM
SUZANNE VEGA
MICK JAGGER TALKS
THE REPLACEMENTS
FREE JOHN & YOKO
ROCK-A-BILLY
THE WHO
DYLAN
STEVE MILLER
FLEETWOOD MAC
HEART
TED NUGENT
JEFFERSON STARSHIP
J. GEILS
VAN HALEN
McCARTNEY INTERVIEW!
BOB SEGER
BLONDIE
THE CURE
WARREN ZEVON
SCORPIONS
PRETENDERS
ASIA
BLONDIE
ALLMANS ON TOUR
DOOBIES
STONES
DAVID BOWIE
TOM PETTY
Aretha
GRATEFUL DEAD
John Sebastian
STOOGES PT. 2
Firesign Theatre
ALICE COOPER
GRAND FUNK
THE STONES
JETHRO TULL
KEITH RICHARD
WHO'S LAST?
THE WHO IN CRISIS!
PINK FLOYD
THE CLASH
AC/DC
MOTT THE HOOPLE
News Fiction Poetry Film TV Sports Books Records
Jackson Five at Home
Commander Cody
Cat Stevens
PAT BENATAR
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
ROD STEWART
EAGLES
HALL & OATES
JOAN JETT
JUDAS PRIEST
BILLY IDOL
SIMPLE MINDS
ALICE COOPER'S ALCOHOL COOKBOOK
KEITH RICHARD
GEORGE HARRISON
LED ZEPPELIN
BEE GEES
JETHRO TULL
DIRE STRAITS
ROCKPILE
JOHN FOGERTY
BON JOVI
DARYL HALL
JERRY LEE LEWIS
THE KEITH RICHARD INTERVIEW
BANG!
TED NUGENT
SPECIAL SECRETS OF THE STARS ISSUE
RINGO
JIMMY PAGE
ZZ TOP
ELTON
BRIAN WILSON
THE STONES
POLICE
MICK JAGGER
BAD CO.'s
STONES FEVER!
PRINCE
DAVID BYRNE
TALKING HEADS
IGGY POP
STRAY CATS
THE NAKED BOWIE!
ROD STEWART
BEACH BOYS CONTEST
Beach Boys - A fan tells all
Black Sabbath Extravaganza
Smokey Robinson Retires!
Sly Stone's New Music
Beefies in Germany
Capt. Beefheart
Move
TOM PETTY
BEATLES!
KEEP ON TRUCKIN'
KISS
PETER FRAMPTON
EMERSON LAKE & PALMER
THE KNACK
KEITH RICHARDS
TED NUGENT "THE ANIMAL" BITES BACK
LED ZEPPELIN On The Road
ROBERT PLANT
THE POLICE
PAT BENATAR: MARRIED TO THE MOB?
Robert Cray
VAN HALEN
JOHN COUGAR
U2's IRISH HOMECOMING
FRAMPTON

**To the men who don't know and the little girls who understand . . .**

# CREEM™

## America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine

Collins
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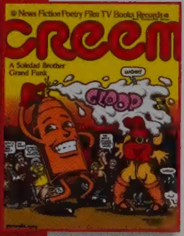
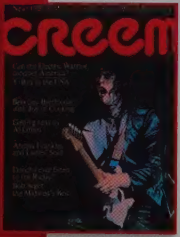
**7** October 1969
*Mitch Ryder*
*Photo by*
*Barry Kramer*

**13** October 1971
*Mick Jagger*
*Photo by*
*Charlie Auringer*



**19** November 1971
*Mr. Dreamwhip*
*Illustration by*
*R. Crumb*

**25** August 1976
*Paul McCartney*
*Illustration by*
*Gary Ciccarelli*



**42** May 1972
*T.Rex*
*Photo by*
*Charlie Auringer*

**47** June 1972
*Black Sabbath*
*Photo by*
*Charlie Auringer*

**49** Spring 1977
*Best of CREEM*
*Illustration by*
*Gary Ciccarelli*

**54** June 1973
*Johnny Winter*
*Photo by*
*Raeanne Rubenstein*

**67** January 1972
*Alice Cooper*
*Photo by*
*Ric Siegel*

**94** April 1974
*Iggy Pop*
*Photo by*
*Neal Preston*

**8** **FOREWORD: UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL** by Paul Trynka

**10** **INTRODUCTION: LET IT CREEM** by Brian J. Bowe

**12** **CREAM: AU REVOIR** by Tony Reay, April and May 1969

**14** **MC5: WELCOME TO DETROIT**
by Pam Brent, John Sinclair and Dave Marsh, excerpts from March, September and December 1969 and October 1971

**22** **PAUL McCARTNEY: THE WALRUS WAS PAUL?**
by Deday LaRene, excerpt November 1969

**26** **GRAND FUNK RAILROAD . . . OR THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY** by Debbie Burr, December 1969

**30** **THE MICHIGAN SCENE TODAY!**
by Dave Marsh, Deday LaRene and Barry Kramer, excerpt April 1970

**34** **JOE COCKER: MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN**
by Dave Marsh, excerpt May 1970

**37** **A CREEM FOUNDING FATHER REMEMBERS**
by Ric Siegel

**38** **TODD RUNDGREN: CREEM'S PROFILES** June 1974

**40** **MITCH RYDER AND THE DETROIT WHEELS: WHEELS ON THE ROAD** by Barry Kramer, August 1970

**43** **J. GEILS BAND: CREEM'S PROFILES** May 1974

**44** **J. GEILS BAND: BEANTOWN GET-DOWN**
by Ben Edmonds, March 1971

**52** **STEVE MARRIOTT: CREEM'S PROFILES** September 1975

**55** **KISS: CREEM'S PROFILES** October 1974

**56** **A CREEM EDITOR REMEMBERS**
by Dave DiMartino

**57** **PSYCHOTIC REACTIONS AND CARBURETOR DUNG**
by Lester Bangs, excerpt June 1971

**59** **ROXY MUSIC: CREEM'S PROFILES** May 1975

**60** **THE WHO: A WHO PRIMER**
by Dave Marsh, December 1971

**64** **ALICE COOPER'S ALCOHOL COOKBOOK**
June 1973

**68** **FREE JOHN AND YOKO** excerpt, March 1972

**70** **MOTT THE HOOPLE: DIARY OF A ROCK STAR**
by Ian Hunter, April 1974

**73** **DAVE EDMUNDS: CREEM'S PROFILES**
November 1980

**74** **CHEECH & CHONG: CREEM'S PROFILES**
September 1974

**76** **A CREEM DREEM REMEMBERS** by Bebe Buell

**77** **ROD STEWART: CREEM'S PROFILES** April 1975

**78** **T.REX: "WHAT THEY TRIED TO DO WITH BOWIE WAS CREATE ANOTHER MARC BOLAN,"**
by Cameron Crowe, July 1973

**80** **SCREAMIN' JAY HAWKINS: THE "I PUT A SPELL ON YOU" MAN REVEALS WHY VOODOO DIDN'T— & MAY NEVER WORK** by Nick Tosches, August 1973

**82** **THE CARS: CREEM'S PROFILES** February 1979

**86** **ANDROGYNY IN ROCK: A SHORT INTRODUCTION (PLUS THE ANDROGYNY HALL OF FAME)** August 1973

92 **IGGY AND THE STOOGES: TAKE AMERICA BY THE SPLEEN** by Esther and Lester, April 1974
98 **NEW YORK DOLLS: GREATEST HITS VOLUME 1** by Ben Edmonds, October 1973
104 **JUKEBOX CRUCI-FIX** by Patti Smith, June 1975
109 **FACES: ROD JUMPS TEAMS** by Barbara Charone, November 1975
110 **FACES: FACES HUDDLE FOR DEFENSIVE PLAY** by Lester Bangs, November 1975
111 **GRACE SLICK: CREEM'S PROFILES** January 1975
112 **KISS: REVIEWS AND COMIX, PLUS UNMASKED! EXCLUSIVE EXPOSÉ** July 1975, June and August 1976, February 1981
116 **THE ROLLING STONES: JAGGERNAUT WILD HORSE ON A PLASTIC PHALLUS** by Charles Bukowski, October 1975
118 **ALBUM REVIEW: THE ROLLING STONES—*EXILE ON MAIN STREET*** by Lester Bangs, August 1972
120 **THE ROLLING STONES: KEITH RICHARDS—THE PUSHER BEHIND THE STONES** by Barbara Charone, October 1976
124 **ALBUM REVIEW: RAMONES—*RAMONES*** by Gene Sculatti, August 1976
125 **RAMONES: CREEM'S PROFILES** September 1979
126 **AEROSMITH: TRAIN KEPT A-ROLLIN'** by Lisa Robinson, December 1976
130 **LED ZEPPELIN: ONE MORE FOR THE ROAD** by Jaan Uhelszki, July 1977
136 **RUNAWAYS: THESE BITCHES SUCK AND REBUTTAL** April–May 1977
141 **KEITH RICHARDS: CREEM'S PROFILES** November 1979
142 **INSIDE WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS** by Jeffrey Morgan, March 1979
144 **ANOTHER CREEM EDITOR REMEMBERS** by Jeffrey Morgan
145 **RED KROSS: CREEM'S PROFILES** December 1987
146 **SEX PISTOLS: IN THE PROMISED LAND** by Patrick Goldstein, April 1978
150 **DEAD BOYS: TELL NO TALES** by Richard Riegel, February 1979
154 **THE CLASH: RASH CLASH MASH IN MOTOR CITY BASH** by Dave DiMartino, December 1979
159 **THE CLASH: CREEM'S PROFILES** May 1980
160 **A CREEM EDITOR REMEMBERS** by Ivan Suvanjieff
161 **IGGY POP: SOLDIER OF THE DOG CHOW APOCALYPSE** by Mark J. Norton, excerpt June 1980
167 **ANGUS YOUNG: CREEM'S PROFILES** October 1981
168 **BOB SEGER: BOPS HORIZONTALLY** by Dave DiMartino, September 1980
172 **PRETENDERS: CHRISSIE DON'T YA TALK SO LOUD** by Susan Whitall, August 1980

America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine
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LOU REED KING OF THE SLAG HEAP

**107** **March 1975**
*Lou Reed*
*Photo by*
*Andy Kent*

America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine
creem
ROD STEWART

**108** **November 1975**
*Rod Stewart & Britt Ekland*
*Photo by*
*Stephen Morley*

America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine
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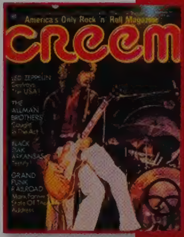
MICK JAGGER
STONES FEVER!

**123** **August 1975**
*Mick Jagger & Keith Richards*
*Photo by*
*Bob Gruen*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**128** **September 1973**
*Jimmy Page*
*Photo by*
*Neil Zlozower*

America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine
creem
HALL & OATES
JOAN JETT

**137** **June 1982**
*Joan Jett*
*Photo by*
*Robert Kiss*

creem
STEVE MILLER
HEART
TED NUGENT

**140** **September 1977**
*Ted Nugent*
*Photo by*
*Ken Kwasnieski*

America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine
creem
QUEEN
ERIC CLAPTON
ELVIS
CHAOS
JOHNNY ROTTEN

**149** **April 1978**
*Johnny Rotten*
*Photo by*
*Hans Hartwig*

America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine
creem
McCARTNEY INTERVIEW!
BOB SEGER
SKIN TIGHT!

**171** **August 1978**
*Bob Seger*
*Photo by*
*Bob Alford*

America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine
creem
THE PRETENDERS

**179** **August 1980**
*Pretenders*
*Photo by*
*Robert Matheu*

America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine
creem
大好評!!
CHEAP TRICK

**181** **July 1979**
*Cheap Trick*
*Photo by*
*Bob Alford*

**193** December 1983
*Brian Setzer*
*Photo by*
*Bob Alford*

**196** November 1983
*The Police*
*Photo by*
*Bob Alford*

**211** August 1983
*Ray Davies*
*Photo by*
*Robert Matheu*

**215** January 1984
*John Cougar*
*Photo by*
*Bob Alford*

**229** October 1986
*David Lee Roth*
*Photo by*
*Neil Zlozower*

**233** July 1984
*Rob Halford*
*Photo by*
*Bob Alford*

**243** February 1987
*David Byrne*
*Photo by*
*Robert Matheu*

**247** May 1987
*Beastie Boys*
*Photo by*
*Robert Matheu*

**256** December 1987
*George Harrison*
*Photo by*
*Robert Matheu*

**272** Spring 1978
*Best of CREEM*
*Illustration by*
*Gary Ciccarelli*

**182** **THE DAMNED: HOW (NOT) TO SHOOT A CREEM PROFILE** by Robert Matheu

**184** **QUEEN: THE SECRET HISTORY OF QUEEN**
by Rick Johnson, August 1981

**188** **PLASMATICS: 1984 WILL BE A LITTLE EARLY**
by Edouard Dauphin, September 1981

**190** **BLONDIE: CREEM'S PROFILES** November 1979

**197** **CHEAP TRICK: CREEM'S PROFILES** April 1979

**198** **BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: TAKES IT TO THE RIVER**
by Dave DiMartino, excerpt January 1981

**204** **BOB DYLAN: MORE OF AN OUTLAW THAN YOU EVER WERE?** by Richard Reigel, excerpt March 1982

**205** **DEVO: CREEM'S PROFILES** February 1982

**206** **DURAN DURAN: OH! YOU PRETTY THINGS FROM PLANET EARTH** by Toby Goldstein, January 1983

**208** **THE KINKS: A SAD KOMMENTARY**
by John Mendelssohn, August 1983

**212** **JOHN COUGAR: PINK HOUSES IN THE MIDWEST**
by Bill Holdship, January 1984

**216** **GO-GO'S: CREEM'S PROFILES** March 1983

**219** **DUETS FROM HELL!: ONE TIMES ONE EQUALS SOME PAIR!** by Rick Johnson, October 1984

**220** **PINK FLOYD: CAN I HAVE MY MONEY BACK?**
by Dave DiMartino, November 1984

**226** **DAVID LEE ROTH: AND THE GLEEBY SHALL ROCK**
by Billy Altman, April 1985

**230** **JUDAS PRIEST: LEATHERED, STUDDED DUDES OR . . .** by Sylvie Simmons, September 1986

**234** **REPLACEMENTS: DRINKING (AND DRINKING LOTS MORE) WITH THE REPLACEMENTS**
by Bill Holdship, September 1986

**237** **REPLACEMENTS: CREEM'S PROFILES**
October 1987

**240** **THE CURE: THE HEAD ON THE CURE**
by Dave DiMartino, December 1986

**244** **BEASTIE BOYS: LAY IT DOWN, CLOWNS**
by Chuck Eddy, May 1987

**249** **YET ANOTHER CREEM EDITOR REMEMBERS**
by Bill Holdship

**250** **THE GEORGE HARRISON INTERVIEW**
by J. Kordosh, December 1987 and January 1988

**252** **RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS: CREEM'S PROFILES**
June 1986

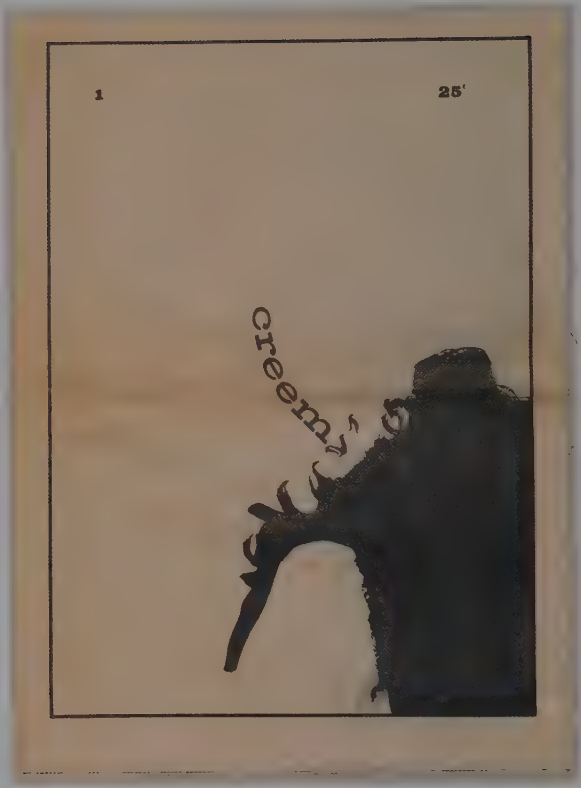
**259** **WAS (NOT WAS): CREEM'S PROFILES**
March 1984

**260** **JOHNNY CASH: A LITTLE FARTHER . . . DOWN THE LINE** by J. Kordosh, July 1988

**264** **fIREHOSE: IF'N YOU DON'T KNOW BY NOW**
by Steve Peters, July 1988

**269** **OUTRO: EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY AND I'M STICKING TO MINE . . .**
by Robert Matheu

# Creem



# FOREWORD: UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

The wonderful thing about working on magazines, as anyone who's done so will tell you, is that there's always another one due in another week or month: always the tantalizing prospect of that perfect issue still to come, while your mistakes are quite literally ephemeral, submerged under a continuing deluge of newsprint.

But a few magazines aren't ephemeral. Their stories resound long after they've left the newsstands. None more so than dozens, or perhaps hundreds, of the stories that ran in CREEM, from when it first hit the Detroit streets in March 1969, until it disappeared from the shelves in November 1988. Leafing through the features lovingly assembled in this collection, I couldn't quite believe how many of them were already etched in my memory—nor that, in so many instances, these were stories that proved literally defining moments, capturing their subjects and those ephemeral events forever. It reminds me of hours spent in the University of Michigan library looking through back issues, searching for specific stories but instead sidetracked, poring fascinated over 30-year-old magazines that still felt as fresh as if they'd just rolled off the press.

From today's perspective, a crucial part of CREEM's schtick is seen as the magazine's championing of then marginal, but now celebrated, Detroit bands like the MC5 and the Stooges. In reality its coverage was far less parochial. For it's the *attitude* that is quintessentially Detroit: stripped down, no pretension but plenty of attitude, an urban lyricism and a wicked sense of humor. All of which makes up something that today's bland, market-researched magazines so often lack—a soul.

That soul was wrapped up in a rare intelligence: so much of the writing not only stands up today, it still ranks among the best music journalism, period. On occasion, the writing glories in its own exuberance, most notably in Lester Bangs' impassioned, insightful rants that have become celebrated in their own right. Elsewhere, the writing is just as impressive for its subtletly, nowhere more evident than in Cameron Crowe's wonderful, brief portrait of Marc Bolan, the British Glam rocker who was unassailable in his own land, but was showing unmistakable signs of hubris once over the Atlantic. In just a few hundred words, we can laugh at Bolan's bitchiness, sympathize with his obviously disturbed mental state, and relish the inevitability of his imminent commercial decline. There are many other writers who display just as much insight and verve, some of them—including Ben Edmonds, Dave DiMartino or Greil Marcus—ones whom I count myself lucky to commission work from at MOJO; many of CREEM's photographers, too, are still at the top of their game.

What we can never recapture today, though, is the glorious innocence of these times, when musicians were oblivious of the machinations of PR, and photographers would share the stage, rather than being confined to the orchestra pit for a measly three numbers. For a few glorious years, you could get up close and personal. And this collection of magnificent stories is about as up close and personal as you will get in rock 'n' roll.

*—Paul Trynka*

*Paul Trynka was Editor in Chief of MOJO from 1999 to 2003. His most recent book is* Open Up and Bleed, *a biography of CREEM mainstay Iggy Pop.*

ROBERT MATHEU

Onstage with the Faces
Cleveland Municipal
Stadium, August 23, 1975

# INTRODUCTION: LET IT CREEM

***"Me and Iggy were giggin' with Ziggy and kickin' with the MC5.***
***Ted and Seger were burnin' with fever . . . and CREEM kept a talkin'."***
*—Alice Cooper*

Listening to those lyrics, I can remember my own first CREEM experience. It was December 1982. I was a 10-year-old obsessive rocker who had already discovered Circus and Hit Parader. The issue was likely purchased because the Who was on the cover. What I found inside was confusing, amusing and exciting. Was Boy Howdy beer real? What's up with those photo captions? Were those people *serious*?

At that moment, I had no idea just how serious they were.

It may be hard for some to understand the true impact CREEM Magazine had on the world of rock 'n' roll. There are perhaps some readers who are too young, or whose only connection to CREEM Magazine comes from Cameron Crowe's moving depiction of it in *Almost Famous*. For those readers, the question may present itself: "America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine? Hmm, doesn't that seem a little *presumptuous*?"

Not at all. CREEM Magazine wasn't merely a magazine *about* rock 'n' roll. The magazine *itself* was a manifestation of rock 'n' roll in all its sweaty glory. The writing, the photography—hell, even many of the *ads* embodied the spirit of rock 'n' roll.

CREEM was born in 1969 in Detroit's Cass Corridor, at the intersection of the American Dream and the American Ruse. Motown and blues were hometown sounds. Mitch Ryder led the way in developing heartfelt and heavy rock 'n' soul. The local soundtrack included the MC5, Amboy Dukes, Bob Seger, Grand Funk Railroad and the Stooges. Nowhere else in the world was the music—or the journalism—as loud and aggressive. Both reflected their surroundings: as powerful as a Hemi engine, as loud as a stamping press, and as dirty as the smokestacks of Zug Island.

CREEM was also founded amidst the revolutionary hubbub in Detroit and heavily influenced by the fiery rhetoric of the White Panther party. Those elements helped CREEM quickly develop a personality that was different from the other journals of the counterculture. Its hallmarks were impeccable musical taste, a riotous sense of humor and a low tolerance for bullshit. Working together in the newsroom-cum-psych lab, these characters worked together to create a new form of participatory journalism that spoke to readers on a deep level.

"Having a certain sense of humor in the rock 'n' roll culture—CREEM nailed it in a way that nobody else was. It informed a lot of people's sensibilities," says Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth—who is also an obsessive archivist of rock's detritus.

Moore remembers the first issue of CREEM he saw (June 1973's Alice Cooper cover). "I knew immediately that its tone was even more towards what I wanted out of rock 'n' roll writing," Moore says.

"*Rolling Stone* kind of had that tone, too, but it seemed more politically correct and wanting to keep with the counterculture establishment," he says. "Whereas I think CREEM was a little more reckless, focusing on things like the Stooges and the MC5. I was really drawn towards that. It was very Midwest American, and taking the piss out of celebrity rock like Led Zeppelin or whatever, and having fun with it."

Cheap Trick drummer Bun E. Carlos says the magazine filled a void for fans in the hinterlands.

"In the Midwest, rock music press and info was very hard to find," Carlos says. "*Rolling Stone* was pompous and long-winded. *Circus* magazine seemed to religiously print the record company propaganda. *Rock Scene* magazine had mostly New York City gossip—but a least it had photos. Amateur photos at best. But CREEM was like us.

"CREEM was the wise-ass middle child who wanted the details, all the scoop. They had good pictures and good articles, great reviews and the right amount of know-it-all humor and irony," Carlos adds. "It was perfect for the post-Watergate universe we were living in. Only *Trouser Press* came close, but they burned bright and disappeared fast. By the late '70s, CREEM was *it*. It was the voice of the post-prog, power pop, hard rock punk generation. CREEM had the best and latest music, photos, reviews—and they had the best music polls, too."

The whole scheme was hatched in a head shop called Mixed Media in the notorious Cass Corridor. The idea came from British ex-pat Tony Reay, who served as the magazine's first editor. But it was the head shop's owner (and soon-to-be CREEM publisher) Barry Kramer who ran with the vision and over the next few years transformed the publication from a newspaper of the local counterculture into a national magazine of incalculable impact.

CREEM's mission was evident from the get-go. An editorial appeared in CREEM's first anniversary issue in which the founders wrote: "We hope to bring a fresh, vital, high-energy perspective to bear on our culture. We are a rock 'n' roll magazine, with all that that implies. Our culture is a rock 'n' roll culture. We are rock 'n' roll people."

In many ways, CREEM functioned as a giant feedback loop, informing the rock 'n' roll community and in turn learning from it. The magazine's letters section provides a great example of how that worked. In 1973, legendary editor Lester Bangs threw down the gauntlet to reader and frequent letter writer Jeffrey Morgan, asking if he thought he was "dissipated enough" to join the CREEMster's union. Morgan picked up

RESTAURANT
THE BIG TWIST
Coca-Cola

CHARLIE AURINGER

that challenge and became one of CREEM's longest-serving and most inventive writers. Meanwhile, CREEM staffers played in bands like the Mutants and the Ramrods. Patti Smith was a frequent contributor before launching her own music career (on which CREEM reported).

In short, John Sinclair was right on at least one point he made in his CREEM essay *Liberation Music*: it worked best when there was *no separation* between the disparate elements of the rock culture—the audience, the performers and the chroniclers.

Through the 1970s, CREEM moved from its original inner-city digs to a farm in Walled Lake and then to the posh suburb of Birmingham "which in local geography is a trajectory that describes success," wrote Dave Marsh years later. Over that period, the list of the magazine's writers reads like a rockcrit Mount Rushmore—Lester Bangs, Robert Christgau, Ben Edmonds, Lenny Kaye, Dave Marsh, Richard Meltzer, Lisa Robinson, Jaan Uhelszki and too many more to name.

In 1981, publisher Kramer died and his widow Connie ran the ship for a few years before selling the magazine to Arnold Levitt. In 1987, Levitt moved the magazine to Los Angeles. While CREEM was no longer as visually compelling as it had been, the writing remained strong in those unfairly maligned years thanks in large part to the editing triumvirate of Dave DiMartino, Bill Holdship and J. Kordosh.

By 1988, the CREEM Dreem was over, and the magazine folded. But its legacy remains potent. Ex-CREEM writer Cameron Crowe immortalized the magazine in the aforementioned *Almost Famous*. The R. Crumb-drawn mascot Boy Howdy continues to show up in movies and on television. Alice Cooper name-checked CREEM in his song "Detroit City," explaining that "CREEM is part of Detroit's rock history. Detroit was the hard rock capitol of the world and CREEM was the hard rock bible. To us, CREEM was as much as part of the Detroit rock scene as us, the Stooges, the Amboy Dukes, and the MC5.

"CREEM rocked as much as the bands. It was the same attitude," Cooper adds. "The staff of CREEM didn't just come to the shows to write about them, they came to rock."

CREEM may have been *America's* Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine, but its influence traveled far beyond Yankee soil. In 2003, Nick Cave reminisced about the magazine's influence on his youth in Australia. "My brother used to get it," he says. "He was a big music fan. It was like The Bible for him."

> ***"Well c'mon over baby, step into my time machine . . ."***
> *—Mark Farner*

This tome is intended to provide a survey of CREEM Magazine's initial 20-year run—a greatest hits package, if you will. During the period memorialized here in this book, the magazine witnessed—and was complicit in—the rise and fall of revolutionary hippie rock, blues rock, glam, punk, new wave, metal many other permutations thereof. The list of artists that CREEM *understood* (and championed) before anyone else includes the MC5, the Stooges, Alice Cooper, New York Dolls, Black Sabbath, Kiss, Aerosmith, Ramones, Cheap Trick, The Clash, Van Halen and the Cure. But it was about more than who was the first kid on the block to discover the hot new band. At its best, CREEM groked that rock 'n' roll was *a culture* that pointed to a holistic approach to living. It was intelligent, but it didn't think it was any smarter than its readers.

The first thing that's plainly obvious is that this book isn't comprehensive. Many times, going through old issues we saw something that wasn't on the list and said "Oh, *damn*, we *gotta* put that in!" Generally (though not always), restraint prevailed. Otherwise we would have ended up with a book as big as the *Mahabharata* and *War and Peace* and Richard F. Burton's complete annotated *Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* all in one.

To winnow things down, we started by making lists—separate lists of artists and writers who had to be included. We searched for iconic pieces, ones that captured a particular moment of rock 'n' roll history. We scoured the photo archive, looking for unpublished nuggets (unfortunately the full frontal nudity shots of Martin Mull remain unpublished for the moment). And—in the most pleasurable (if not slightly fetishistic) part of the process—we paged through the issues themselves.

We've tried to stay true to much of the stylistic free-for-all that made the best of CREEM's writing refreshing. The early days were rougher; by the end, CREEM seemed to have established a fairly uniform stylebook, thanks in large part to editor-in-chief Dave DiMartino. We've corrected a few things that were obvious typos and standardized some small style points—most notably making uniform "rock 'n' roll" instead of "rock and roll" or "rock & roll." We felt comfortable taking that particular liberty since the term was codified on the cover of the magazine itself for many years.

In addition to the archival material, we sought commentary from CREEM alumni, some of the musicians who were featured in the magazine, and some people who were influenced by it.

So here it is: a cross section of CREEM, for your pleasure. Jump into our time machine.

*—Brian J. Bowe*
*Saugatuck, Mich.*

*CREEM Magazine was named after founding editor Tony Reay's favorite band, Cream. Writing under the byline "[illegible]," Reay paid tribute to the band, which [illegible], in the magazine's first three issues.*

. . . The next time I saw Eric Clapton, he was wearing the same jacket, playing blues on the same guitar and had gotten much thinner. He also had two other weirdos with him. This time I knew who he was. I had followed his career up through the Yardbirds and Mayall, and now knew he was at last with Jack and Ginger and they were big enough to destroy the world and they knew it. At first, the idea of forming such a perfect group had been too much for the public, and it had shown through. This was a disappointing setback for Cream ("You thought the leaden winter/Would bring you down forever") but instead of stooping to the level of the public, they had continued to play their own blues, hard and tight, and agonizingly tortuous.

So, there I was—there they were. It's five years later now.

I am still around—where are they?

*—April 1969*

I am writing my final piece on Cream. These three musicians upon whom I have showered so many praises and to whose defenses I have so often spring, are now just that: three musicians.

They did so many things to me and for me that I feel they're mine—but every Cream addict feels the same way. Their music was—and ever will be—so what can you say? They said Goodbye. It was pretty bad, but it sold. That was why it was put out—because someone in charge knew what it is like to be an addict. They knew it would sell because if you're addicted to heroin, then you gotta have it whether it's good heroin or bad.

That's Cream.

God—you don't talk about Eric Clapton. He's a moving pile of emotion—you've got to feel.

You don't say that Ginger is a better drummer than everyone else because there are probably better drummers. But none of them are the drummer.

Jack Bruce is an excellent bass player/singer. But if you take the greatest drummer and guitarist and bassist and singer in the world, you'll never get "Tales of Brave Ulysses" or "We're Going Wrong" or "I'm So Glad" or "World of Pain."

Because it's got to be the three.

"Thinking 'bout the times you drove in my car,
Thinking that I might have drove you too far."

*—May 1969*

CREEM
TM

UNITED

# MC5

## WELCOME TO DETROIT

PHOTOS BY CHARLIE AURINGER

***In the magazine's second issue, under the headline "CREEM IS," founder Barry Kramer wrote:***

***CREEM magazine is Detroit. CREEM will provide a forum for the diverse areas of our "scene" to communicate and consolidate. This paper is devoted to media with the emphasis on music and the people that live it—you. Detroit is home to many creative artists, and for a reason. We are real, receptive and quite selective.***

***There are those who would like to exploit this market. Sell its soul. We won't let this happen. CREEM will help build a more cohesive community—we want to know who our friends are—we want to expose our enemies. CREEM is a compliment to those other media extensions already involved in the community.***

***We particularly want to discuss the ramifications of the music world rationally, internationally and especially in Detroit. We can't do this without your help because you are Detroit. Involve yourself. Music and art are the threads of community. Help us bind these together. If in any way you can contribute to the effectiveness of CREEM—do it!***

**The earliest issues chronicled the local scene in great detail. The mighty MC5 ruled that scene, and that band's rise and demise was of particular interest to the magazine's founders, as shown in the following excerpts.**

### MC5 AT THE CROW'S NEST

BY PAM BRENT • MARCH 1969

. . . The Crow's Nest is small, extremely so. One cannot possibly fathom the results of as renowned a group as the MC5 playing there until one has actually lived through the experience. This, however, is not easily done.

Arriving approximately thirty minutes after opening time, one is confronted with a block-long double line, in which one is obliged to stand, freezing for an added half hour. Once inside, one pushes and shoves one's way through a solid mass of human flesh in an attempt to rid (oneself) of that unwanted coat. Having succeeded in depositing it on the lower, a fight to ascend the stairway ensues.

Reaching the main level, where hundreds of bodies are sitting or standing awaiting the Five, one listens to the Ashenperpol. A fairly good group, but one whose music is made all but inaudible by the constant flow of persons pushing and shoving to rid themselves of their wraps.

The temperature soon becomes unbearable, and, as the Five mount the stage, the place is literally an inferno. Rob Tyner invites us to remove any extraneous clothing, and in response, shirts, ties, scarves, etc. are removed. The music begins. The wall of sound assaults every cell in these close quarters (so much more greatly magnified here than elsewhere). Bold, exalting tones rip through the heat and set fire to the very air, as sweat drips down the backs and brows of all present.

The roaring vibrations and now-language combine to put the audience in an indescribable and frenzied mood. The voice of the Five resounds all that is the youth of today. An aura of all our sought-after goals; love, peace, freedom, and fucking in the streets—they are (echoes), an incarnation of our will. We receive them with appropriate joy and rapture.

Listless movement resumes as the band breaks for fifteen minutes. The basement fills with people, as it is a few degrees cooler. Ascending the stairs, someone opens the door, and a frosty breeze provides longed-for coolness. A cloud of musky steam sizzles around me for the remainder of the ascent. Upstairs, the doors have been opened, allowing billowing steam to issue from them into the cold night. Everyone that leaves is engulfed, for a time, in his own private cloud.

The Five's next set caused an even greater fever of heat, as we were all urged to stand. The vibrations were good, but the close air burned. The management plans, happily, to remedy the situation through the purchase of the adjacent warehouse. Good luck and more power to them.

All in all, the Crow's Nest will never equal the Grande, but has the potential of providing a good time for its patrons. ■

*The MC5's relationship with CREEM—and my personal relationship with CREEM—was and still is that of comrades. Even when they criticized the MC5, it was revolutionary criticism. I wish there were journalists around today who would ask the popular artists the hard questions. The analysis was perceptive, educated and informed. If you got criticized, you probably got criticized for a pretty good reason. Today, nobody gets criticized and there are plenty of good reasons. It's lamentable that this has gone away, that today's music journalism really consists of blowjobs.*

*I think the thing with CREEM was they really tried to tell the truth as hard as they could. They embraced the zeitgeist—the Detroit, White Panther Party, by-any-means-necessary attitude. Their thinking was informed by these concepts—kick out the jams as a philosophy, kick out the jams meaning if you're doing to do something, do it all the way. It's almost as if they were in the MC5 too, attitude-wise. We weren't from New York or San Francisco or London. We were from Detroit, and it was a gritty, hard place to live, so our art is gritty and hard and our magazine is gritty and hard. They took their work seriously without taking themselves too seriously. They had a healthy sense of irreverence about themselves and everybody else in the world of music.*

*—Wayne Kramer*

Creem
•MC5
•Delaney & Bonnie
•A² Blues

## MC5 ON THE CUSP
### SEPTEMBER 1969

“Our program, at its finest level, is supposed to be together, coherent and relatable. In order to be effective you have to have those qualities, and our program obviously didn’t in the past because our program, which was to clarify things, muddled things. And when you get into a situation like that you either have to check yourself, Jack, or get back:” Rob Tyner of the MC5, a group which is going through a period of critical self-evaluation and restructuring, appraisal and correction that was much needed. All signs indicate that the band is on the move again after a disastrous album, a period of financial chaos and months of creative stagnation.

“You have to check yourself, check what you’re into, and if you’re into the wrong shit, then you’re not doing anything, you’re not doing it right. So you cut it—you got to rearrange, reevaluate new strategies, new ways of doing things. Like we’ve gone through a period of reassessment of our tactics and our capabilities, and we’ve found after this period ended that our program in the past wasn’t always as solid as we might have liked to consider it . . . ”

**SHIT AND FAN** With John Sinclair in jail, the band’s organizational position has been thrown into a state of flux, and they are looking for some new solutions to the non-musical problems that confront them. Rob Tyner: “As of right now, there is no formal relationship between us and Trans-Love, i.e., there is no one from Trans-Love who is working exclusively with the band, for the band, on band business. They do not represent us, and it’s an informal relationship between two separate entities . . .

Wayne Kramer: “Our main responsibility is to ourselves, inasmuch as, hypothetically, if Trans-Love isn’t together enough to be doing all the things that a production-management company does, that doesn’t stop us; we still have to be don’ what we have to be doin’ . . . ”

**THE NEW PROGRAMS** Faced with a demoralizing number of technical and creative problems, the Five brought in an unlikely-looking gunslinger form the East, Jon Landau, who used to write for *Crawdaddy!* (in the days when it was still readable), and who had never before produced a record. “Landau’s the killer catalyst of all time,” says Wayne. “He’s the first person that we ever met that had a working knowledge of rock ’n’ roll music that could relate it to us. He knew about harmony, guitar playing, and he could tell us things and we could respect him. He’s the first person we met that could talk knowledgably about things we were concerned with.

“The thing is, before Landau came out here we were an amateur band. That’s what we were, no insult to the people out there. Anyhow, he looks at the music, and he’s the producer and that means he’s involved with music, and that means that he can tell you things that nobody else can. That’s what you pay him for, that’s his job.

As Rob sees it, “Landau came into the situation and defined a lot of the things that we ought to be aware of.” But for all the influence he has had on the band, the band has clearly left is mark on his consciousness; the familiar Zenta inflection and rhetoric out of Davison, Michigan has been mated to a classic New York accent.

[Landau says]: “The album will be a rock ’n’ roll album, but it won’t be one of those albums that’ll be pretendin’ that it was recorded 20 years ago by a bunch of people. We try and retain some of the spirit of that, but to transpose or make more contemporary the notion of rock ’n’ roll. Turn it into rock ’n’ roll 1969, 1970, so that when we have on the album “Tutti Frutti,” it ain’t an attempt to revive or to emulate in any way the magnificence of Little Richard’s “Tutti Frutti”—one of the outstanding records in the history of the world—but is rather an attempt to take the song and retain certain the energy and certain dimensions of the song, but to put it into a contemporary context. It’s five young Lincoln Park lads, filled with energy, youthful vitality and so forth, and they do it different. It’s just different . . . ” ■

## JOHN SINCLAIR: LETTER FROM PRISON
### DECEMBER 1969

. . . What struck me most about the interview with CREEM was their insistence on disassociating themselves altogether from their music, their show, and their people of the past, as though there was something wrong with what they used to be, something illegitimate which might somehow be held against them by the powers-that-be in the rock ’n’ roll industry. But it should be clearly stated and understood, as it was and is by the people who took part in that period of Detroit rock ’n’ roll history, that there has really never been anything like the MC5 of those days, neither musically or in terms of the intensity and purity of the people’s response to them. It was really far out. If they wouldn’t’ve been so greedy and so eager for the easy fame of the pop-star world they could’ve been a really historic phenomenon . . .

But they went the other way. What they do now will be history in its own right, and we will all be able to follow it. I haven’t heard the new recordings yet, but advance intelligence says they aren’t so hot—that, in fact, they sound like the new Paul Revere and the Raiders. . .

The one thing, really, that I tried to teach that band while I worked with them was this: SEPARATION IS DOOM. No person, no artist especially, can let himself be separated form the people, from whom he draws all strength and all inspiration, The people are the only value worth having, and when so-called artists and musicians separate themselves spiritually and physically from the needs of the actual company of their people, they are doomed. ■

# MC5 BACK ON SHAKIN' STREET

BY DAVE MARSH • OCTOBER 1971

. . . To understand why the MC5, you have to accept their metaphysic as more than a riff—or if only as a riff, as a sincerely meant one—and Sinclair and the MC5 as true-believers. At different levels, perhaps, or from different perspectives, but there's really little question that they all believed it.

If the band saw it all as a game, at any rate, they played with such zeal and intensity that it was hard to see how they didn't take at least the *game* seriously. Politics? Sure, its political, they might have said, but only at the highest political level. Right then, Sinclair and the Panthers agreed with them, because they were only transitionally Marxist, they were still in the process of losing their hippie-ness. But as the Five became more hard-core in their rock 'n' roll stance (and the Panthers more entrenched in the Marxism) a split was inevitable.

Rob Tyner and I talked for a few minutes the other night and we both agreed that, were *Kick Out The Jams* released this year, it would not meet with half the resistance it did then. That's unquestionable, to me. People are ready now.

The worst part of the reception the Five got, was summed up by Sinclair in *Liberation Music* in *CREEM* last winter: "...a revolutionary consciousness...is finally the cosmic consciousness we used to talk about before it started to sound corny—and we have to realize that *it only started to sound corny because there were so many cynical creeps around us who were laughing at our naivete and ripping us off for what we had created out of it at the same time.*"

Unfortunately if the Five ever *did* see themselves as mystics *or* revolutionaries, it was certainly only an adjunct to what they really wanted to be: rock 'n' roll stars. At a higher, more conscious level perhaps, but rock 'n' roll stars nonetheless. Sinclair, seeing that the band from his perspective (and he was as close to one of them as could be, at least for a time) saw them as a device for furthering HIS ideas, which weren't necessarily theirs. Thus, John's letter from Jackson Prison to Wayne Kramer: "You wanted to be bigger than the Beatles, while I only wanted you to be as big as Chairman Mao."

I don't buy the idea of stars, because the whole star trip is antithetical to what the alternative culture represents: stars aren't an alternative at all, they're part of the whole Frank Sinatra entertainment business, which is just another symptom of the fucked-up society we're all fed up with.

On the other hand, I don't think rock 'n' roll can define our ideology for us, either. Or rather, it can point out where our ideology is leading us; as Greil Marcus pointed out, if *New Morning* can be used by the Weather-people to define their ideology then it serves its political purpose on that level. But to consciously parade rock 'n' roll stars (and stars they wish to remain, for the most part) as our theoreticians is pretty ridiculous. I mean, do you really see David Crosby and Paul Kantner as the leaders of the future? Do you want them to be?

Welcome to Detroit
Baggage Claim, Ground Transportation & Hotel

. . . *High Time* is back on Shakin' Street, for the most part, and that's right where the MC5 belong. As Deday LaRene put it in our review of *Back In The U.S.A.*, last year, "Now they're just as fine a rock 'n' roll band as there is."

Still, *High Time* doesn't resolve any of the problems either we or the MC5 face, it doesn't begin to come to grips with the issues raised by the first two albums (and never settled within them because of the disparity between the two approaches).

Maybe that's OK. If the MC5 have taught us anything it should be that we can't lean on rock 'n' roll any longer, that we're going to have to do it ourselves and—finally—that rockin' out is sometimes (but only sometimes) the best solution.

When the Five attempt a return to a sort of metaphysical science-fiction-rock that could suggest some approaches, some ways out, on the second side of *High Time*, they fail miserably. The only successful tunes on the second side are "Over and Over," a pointed slap at radicalism which isn't nearly as lyrically successful as the Who's "Won't Get Fooled Again," even if its music is as successful in general, and "Skunk," a scorching piece of jazz-rock funk that sputters occasionally but still manages to place the MC5 in the position of being one of a handful of white rock 'n' roll bands to come to grips with avant-garde black music. Even "Over and Over" is nearly ruined by a pseudo-cosmic recitation interlude that seems bogus and infantile.

But side one! Aha! Here is the distillation of the MC5, the crux of the issue! *High Time* is tuned right into what Iggy Stooge called "The dull throbbing undertow," to what Alice Cooper calls "Third Generation Rock," to what Grand Funk calls "our people."

The Five deserve to be the best Third Generation band because, in so many ways, they were the first. While Cream had stretched some of the Yardbirds' horizons, the Five had taken the Yardbirds, Them, the Who, the Stones and wrapped them up into a unique new package that brought it all back home. More, they tried to deal with America with it, and if they failed in that, the attempt was almost infinitely admirable.

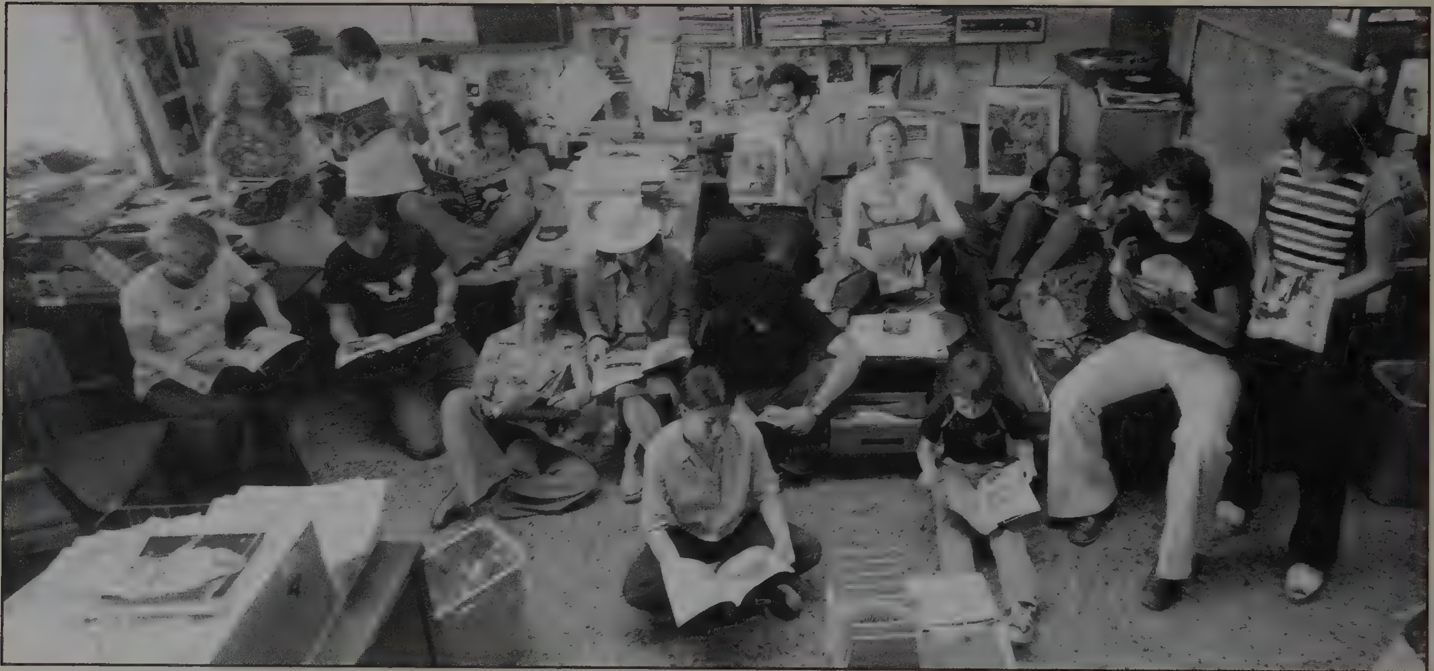
. . . Finally, though, it's all rooted in solid rock 'n' roll music, the crashing guitars of Kramer and Smith melding together all the way through like you always knew they could, Dennis Thompson's drumming returned to its frenetic state after the listlessness of *Back In The U.S.A.*, Mike Davis' bass playing as solid as ever. Tyner's vocals are better, too, because of the way they're mixed and because he's finally loosened up just the right degree.

I suspect that the MC5 had to go through those first two albums to get to this one. Certainly, this album can stand next to either of the other two; *Kick Out The Jams* is more important an artifact, but *High Time*, for pure music, doesn't need to take any bows to it. Not at all.

In the end, the resolution of all the problems that the MC5 have raised doesn't lie in rock 'n' roll anyway. They are a band with a history, that is certainly true. But that doesn't matter anymore, I don't think. For right NOW, the MC5 are one of the finest rock 'n' roll bands we have. To go back to what I said at the beginning, that's the way it always should have been. ■

# BACKSTAGE

## WHERE THE STARS TANK UP & LET THEIR IMAGES DOWN


JOHN COLLIER

CREEM STAFF 1976, 187 S. Woodward Ave., Birmingham, Michigan. Linda St Jean, Sue Seigel, Harvey Zupke, Gene Penton, Eric Genheimer, Billy Goodson, unidentified, Barbara Glynn Cusick, Richard Seigel, Lester, Sue Whitall, Eric Seigel, Barry & Connie Kramer, Charlie Auringer, Jaan Uhelszki!

VACANCY
373941
CHARLIE AURINGER

". . . Dave, Lester, got a match?"

CREEM PHOTO ARCHIVE

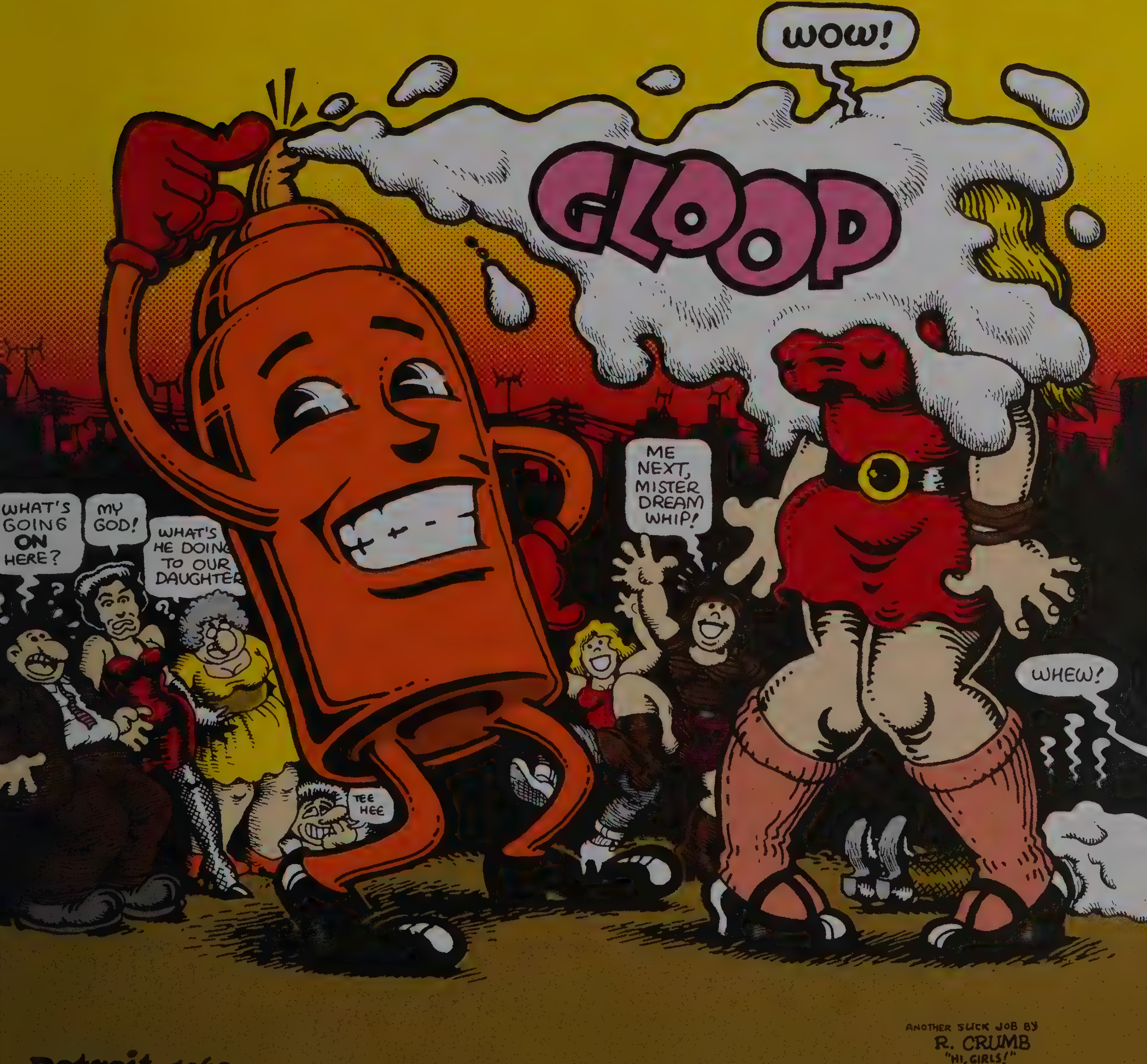
"Whaddya mean you see the ghost of Brian Jones?"

*The back page of CREEM consisted of a group of photos mostly by hopeful stringer photographers. Art Director Charlie Auringer (whom I fear to this day) would drop a folder of his photo choices for that month on our desks at deadline time. Our job: write captions for the photos. We'd spend the better part of the evening (and most of the night) writing what we deemed hilarious captions. We'd crack each other up with every word we wrote. One such picture caption was born of a movie title reviewed that month (It's Alive!). The photo: model Bebe Buell—a very pregnant Bebe Buell. Once the issue hit the stands, Miz Buell's lawyers were on the phone threatening to sue. POSTSCRIPT: Who woulda thunk that load in her belly would grow up to be the lovely Liv Tyler?*

*—Linda Barber Roach*

Linda was the associate editor of CREEM from 1977 to 1980. During these years—along with features editor Susan Whitall, editorial assistant Catherine Gisi and consulting editor Jaan Uhelszki—CREEM became the world's first rock 'n' roll magazine to be fuelled exclusively by Girl Howdy! power. Then Binky had to show up and ruin everything.

# CREEM™


WOW!
GLOOP
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
MY GOD!
WHAT'S HE DOING TO OUR DAUGHTER
TEE HEE
ME NEXT, MISTER DREAM WHIP!
WHEW!
ANOTHER SLICK JOB BY R. CRUMB "HI, GIRLS!"

**Detroit, 1969**

MG
TF-1500
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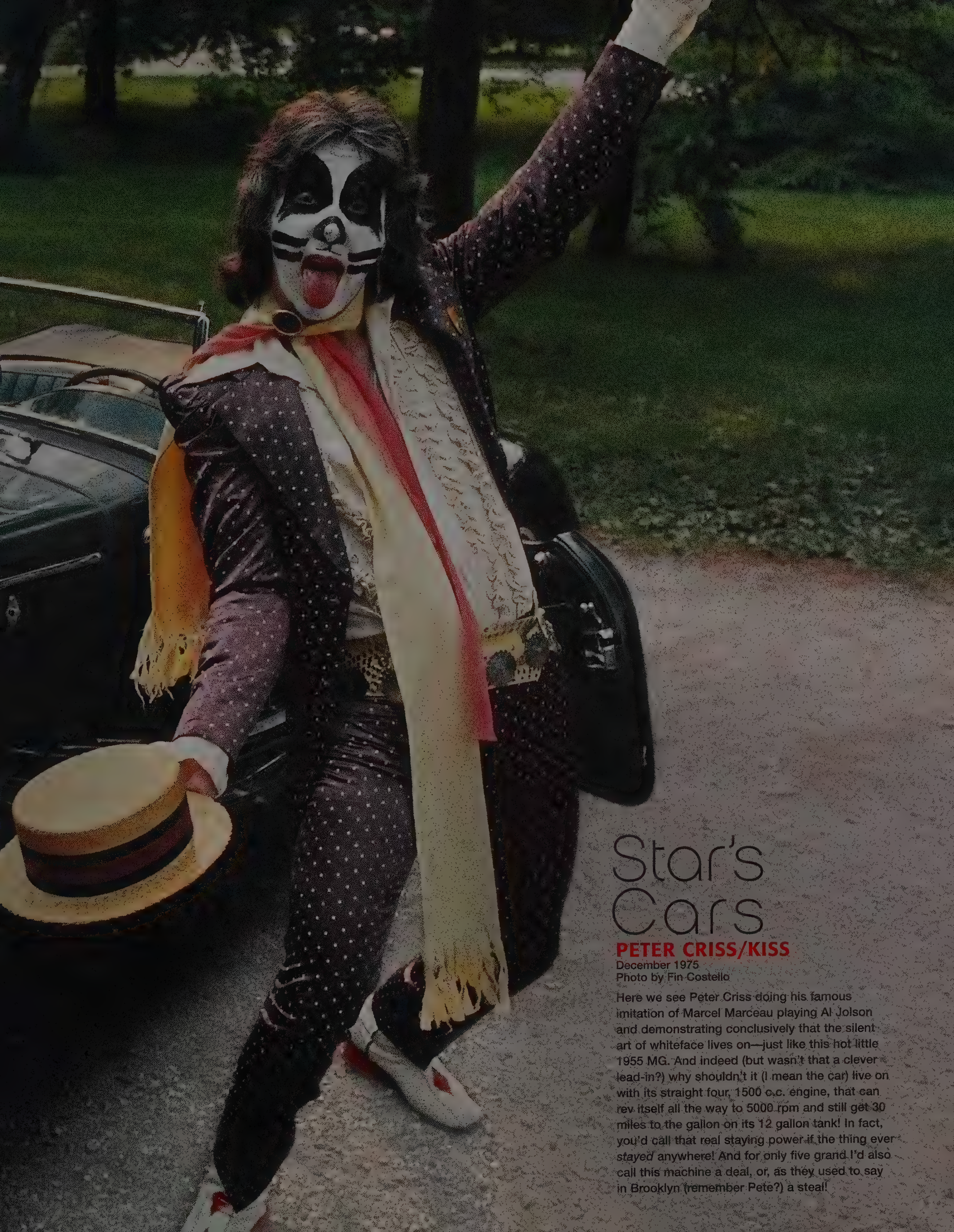
CONNECTICUT



# Star's Cars

## PETER CRISS/KISS

December 1975
Photo by Fin Costello

Here we see Peter Criss doing his famous imitation of Marcel Marceau playing Al Jolson and demonstrating conclusively that the silent art of whiteface lives on—just like this hot little 1955 MG. And indeed (but wasn't that a clever lead-in?) why shouldn't it (I mean the car) live on with its straight four, 1500 c.c. engine, that can rev itself all the way to 5000 rpm and still get 30 miles to the gallon on its 12 gallon tank! In fact, you'd call that real staying power if the thing ever *stayed* anywhere! And for only five grand I'd also call this machine a deal, or, as they used to say in Brooklyn (remember Pete?) a steal!

*This story from CREEM's early days played a large part in propagating the myth/rumor/legend that Paul McCartney was dead. That he had passed on. Ceased to be. He had expired and gone to meet his maker. That he was a stiff, bereft of life, resting in peace. He kicked the bucket, shuffled off his mortal coil, run down the curtain and joined the bleedin' choir invisible. The tale, which originated with a phone call to Detroit DJ Russ Gibb from a listener, was originally published in CREEM in November 1969. Pictured in the image that was used on the cover of that issue, from left to right are Detroit radio personalities Dan Carlisle, John Small and Gibb.*

# THE WALRUS WAS PAUL?

by Deday LaRene
November 1969
Photos by
Charlie Auringer

**DETROIT IS KNOWN FOR AUTOMOBILE FACTORIES, GREENFIELD VILLAGE, GROSSE Pointe, Motown Records, sewage, Zug Island, drag racing, race riots, Bob-lo, salt mines, air pollution, Walter Reuther, pizza, Vernor's ginger ale, Henry Ford, coney island hamburgers, bad teeth, the GM Tech Center, two-headed dogs, the Lions, the Tigers, the Red Wings, the Pistons, the MC5, blind pigs, cheap statues, and now, The Great Paul McCartney Death Hoax.**

**Russ Gibb was doing his weekend radio show in WKNR-FM on Sunday, October 14, when "Some kid from Eastern Michigan University called and asked very simply, what did I think of the story that Paul McCartney was dead. I said ridiculous, no such thing, we'd know about it, the media is right there all the time and obviously you couldn't hide something like Paul McCartney's death." A reasonable response, one would think. But the kid asked Russ to play Revolution No. 9 backwards and see what he thought. When the phrase "number nine," which is repeated sonorously over and over throughout that cut, is played backwards, it sounds a lot like "turn me on, dead man." Hearing that, a seed of doubt was planted . . .**

REVOLVER
BEATLES
MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR

Put all the clues together and you'll know who shot J.F.K.

. . . On Monday, a University of Michigan student and Paul Krassner fan named Fred LaBour started to write a review of *Abbey Road* for the school newspaper, the *Michigan Daily*, but he had heard Gibb's show on Sunday and was taken with the idea of a Beatle Mystery. So instead of writing a review of *Abbey Road*, he fabricated a fantastic plot which he attributed to the Beatles. Paul, he said, had left the EMI studios one night early in November, 1966, to be found four hours later "pinned under his car in a culvert with the top of his head sheared off." He then went on to outline succeeding events in impressive detail.

"When word of Paul's untimely demise was flashed back to the studios," he wrote, "the surviving Beatles, in a hurriedly called conference with George Martin decided to keep the information from the public for as long as possible. As John Lennon reportedly said, "Paul always likes a good joke," and it seemed that they considered the move an attempt to make the best out of a bad situation." George supposedly did the burying. Ringo conducted the services, and John went into seclusion for three days. "After his meditation," LaBour explained, "Lennon called another meeting of the group, again with George Martin, and laid the groundwork for the ensuing hoax. Lennon's plan was to create a false Paul McCartney, bring him into the group as if nothing had happened, and then slowly release the information of the real Paul's death to the world via clues secreted in record albums . . .

. . . With John masterminding the enterprise, which was supposedly no less than the founding of a new religion with Paul as Messiah, resurrected by John to propagate an order of "beauty, humor, love, realism, objectivity. It is a religion for everyday life." On the cover of *Abbey Road* the risen Paul, still dressed as a corpse in business suit and without shoes or socks, is led from the cemetery by John the anthropomorphic God, and his friends. "The real Paul is still dead, of course," wrote LaBour, "but his symbolic resurrection works fine without him." The gospel, you will note, is the entire second side of *Abbey Road* . . .

. . . Drawing from LaBour's article, listener phone calls, and their own investigations, Gibb, Dan Carlisle and John Small of WKNR put together a two hour documentary that was aired the following Sunday night. They divided the presentation of their case into three parts: visual clues, aural clues, and supporting analysis of human phenomena uncovered by their inquiry.

They started with *Yesterday And Today*. On the cover, Paul sits in a trunk which stands open on one end. Turn the album sideways, they recommended, and it looks like he's (sort of) lying in a coffin. Also, here's the first appearance (reported) of the much-mooted Death Hand Sign. Ringo's hand is resting on the top of the trunk, so that in effect it is held palm down over Paul's head. This, they learned from a professor of Eastern culture, is a mystical symbol of death or dying. Another professor noted that it is a sign of blessing, buy anyway it's one of the constants in the search for Paul's death.

Moving on to *Revolver*, they noted the pen and ink artwork by Klaus Voorman in which three of the Beatles look forward, while Paul looks away. John eyes Paul suspiciously, and on the back of the jacket Paul is less clearly defined than the other three. Not much yet, but with *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* things really start to turn up.

The grave. The guitar in flowers, it was decided, was a left handed bass (well, it does have three strings); looked at another way, it spells Paul; less elaborately, it is the initial P. The bust on the grave is a minister; a doll representing Shiva, the destroyer, dissolution. Paul himself. Taller, a hand extending over his head from the crowd in back. On the inside of the jacket a moustache obscures a previously apparent scar and generally makes comparison with the "real" Paul more difficult. The braid he wears is apparently dark edged, he wears a medal supposedly commemorating death, and the patch on his left arm reads "O.P.D.," "Officially Pronounced Dead." On the back cover Paul has his back turned, while the others face forward, and George points to a line in *A Day In The Life* that goes "Wednesday morning at five o'clock," the supposed time of Paul's accident . . .

. . . *Magical Mystery Tour* gave the investigators twenty-four pages of pictures to play with, and they went to work with a vengeance. The cover shows three white animals and one black one, a walrus, whose arms are spread in a crucifixion pose: and "we know from 'Glass Onion' that 'the walrus was Paul'," don't we? Walrus, it was also learned, is Greek for "corpse." Once inside the cover, clues abound. On page two, George plays a sinister death figure that keeps appearing. Hands over Paul's head again; in this picture alone there are two. On page three, Paul playing army recruiter, with lip scar and eyebrow line unlike any other picture of Paul. And the sign on the desk: "I YOU WAS." On page four, Paul holds a writing stick in his right hand; Paul is left-handed. Page five shows four policemen guarding a fantasy involving a line of surgeons, a black walrus playing a white, operating table-like piano, and, as already mentioned, Paul's bass being played by another. Page six has John in disguise in front of a sign, which reads "the best way to go is by M&D coach." It was suggested that M&D might mean M.D. or the like. On page ten, Paul wears black trousers and no shoes, which is the way corpses are dressed for burial. Also, the moustache is gone and no scar is visible on his lip. On page thirteen, Paul is again pictured shoeless, while empty shoes turn up next to Ringo's drums. Empty shoes, we are told, were a Greek symbol of death. Page twenty shows three Beatles wearing red carnations, while Paul's boutonierre is black, and on page twenty four Paul is again pictured with arms raised and a hand over his head.

The double album, *The Beatles*, is sleeved in pure white, which somehow reflects on the nature of the plot, and the fold-out contained within was discovered to contain a wealth of clues. The picture of Paul in a bathtub "might well indicate a brain splatter." The moustached death figure is back, and Paul's head is cut off in one picture, as it was in his death. Toward the lower right hand corner, a pair of ghostly hands appear to reach out for Paul as he plays. Hands are raised, faces are distorted, there is a welter of confusion.

The cover of *Abbey Road* brings the visual aspect of the inquiry to a peak, with the symbolic resurrection. John as savior in white, leading Ringo the undertaker, Paul the corpse, dressed in business suit and shoeless, out of step and carrying a cigarette in his right hand, and George the gravedigger. They are leaving a cemetery and heading in the direction of Paul's house. The white Volkswagen bears the license number 281F, and if Paul had lived, he would have been 28 this year. A police ambulance (?) is on the other side of the street. Is this the road to the Abbey? Where.

The whole thing started with "number nine" played backwards, and the idea of tampering with recordings was so intriguing that by the time they were ready to produce their program, the WKNR investigators had received a good deal of help from technology oriented listeners in reversing, phrasing, isolating, patching, boosting, interpreting and doing all manner of strange and wonderful things to Beatle music, all aimed at uncovering more of this heady stuff. Of course, they didn't do so bad on their own.

Attention centered on "Revolution 9," where it all started. Gibb, Small and Carlisle presented the following transcription of the *mélange* toward the end of that cut:

He hit a light pole; we'd better get him to see a surgeon. (A scream) So anyhow, he went to see a dentist, who gave him a pair of teeth that weren't any good at all. (A car horn) My wings are broken and so is my hair. I'm not in the mood for words. (Gurgling. Sounds of war) Find the night watchman. (Something about a suit) It must be a louse. A fine natural imbalance. Must have got it between the shoulder blades. The twist. The watusi. Eldorado.

"Take this, brother, may it serve you well," says John. Well, OK.

At the end of "I Am The Walrus" is a passage from *King Lear*, taped, according to Beatles Press Officer Derek Taylor, off a radio play, replete with references to burial and untimely death. According to LaBour, this is recorded simultaneously with the announcement of Paul's death which was never broadcast, but investigation did not disclose same. At the end of "Strawberry Fields Forever" is a passage, which when played at 45 rpm, sounds like "I buried Paul."

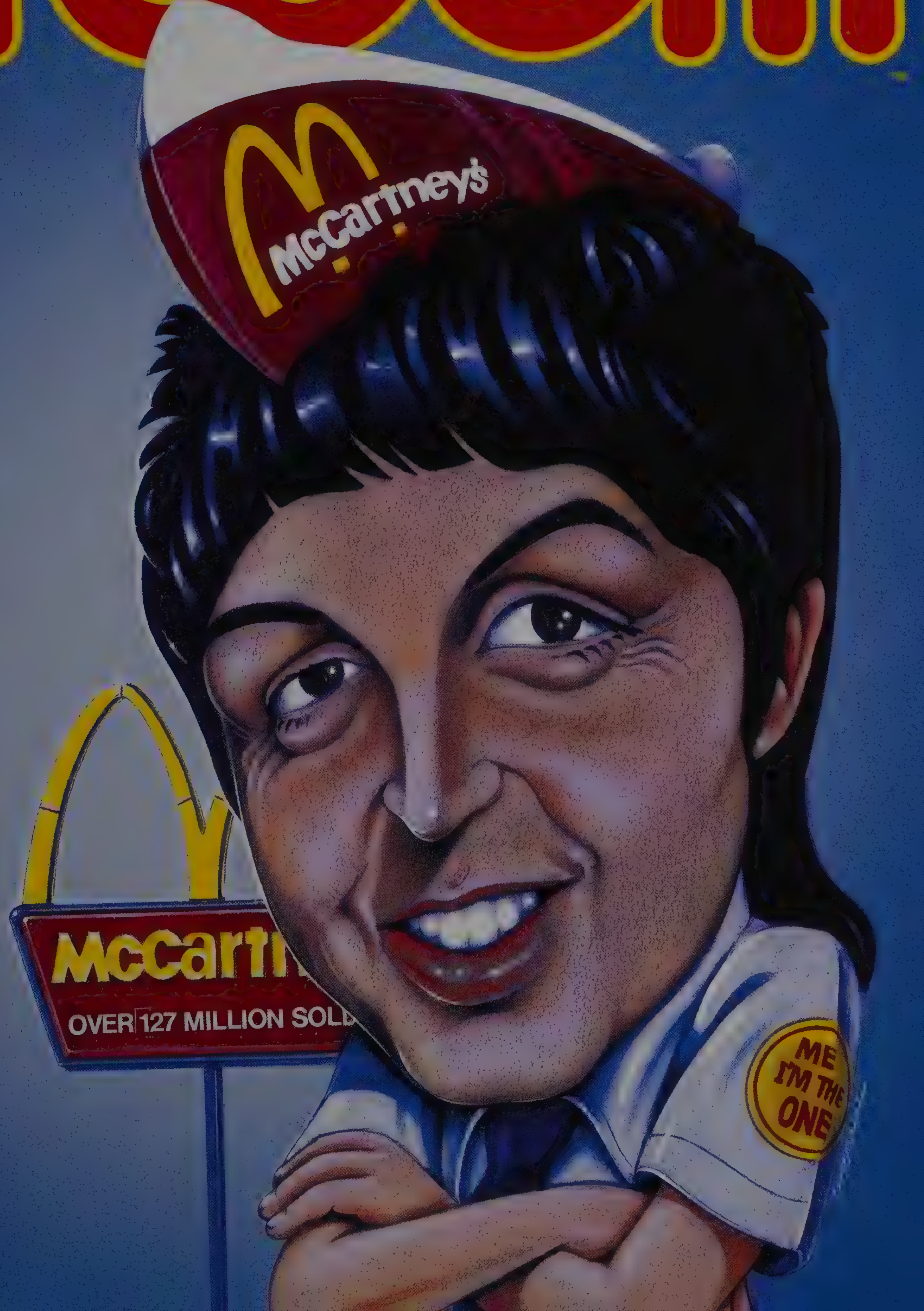
. . . Derek Taylor denied all: "They're not as subtle as you suppose." Rationalized: "We cannot see the symbolism, because there is none. Because we live far more spontaneously than anyone supposes. What you have here are four Beatles who are acting their lives out in a spontaneous way and having read into that acting out something that isn't there."

Would Paul care to make a statement to WKNR about his death? Said Taylor: "It would certainly be great to have a tape of Paul saying he's not dead, but it gets very grotesque. If people don't believe that the man who married Linda, or the man who sang "Maxwell's Silver Hammer," or the man who's on the *Abbey Road* cover is Paul, who's going to believe that his voice on the air is Paul?" More people than you might think, Derek. Two days later, Gibb received a phone call from London from someone who identified himself as Paul McCartney. For half an hour the caller very brusquely explained that he was alive, that none of the supposed clues meant anything like what WKNR was saying they did (that their were no clues at all), and that he resented what he thought to be a cheap publicity stunt. When asked whether the conversation, which was taped, could be broadcast, he answered rather angrily that WKNR had reaped enough benefits from the hoax already, and that an exclusive Paul McCartney interview would not be added thereto. The tape was, however, turned over to a voiceprint specialist, Oscar Tossi of MSU, who stated that he was pretty sure it was really Paul on the phone. But a phone call to Derek Taylor brought yet another denial. Paul, it seems, was in Scotland when the call was made from London, and so it couldn't possibly have been he. On the other hand, McCartney's secretary said that Paul did make the call. The answer to that was that one of Paul's assistants, after a "trying day," decided to have a bit of a joke and put the colonials in their place at the same time. ■

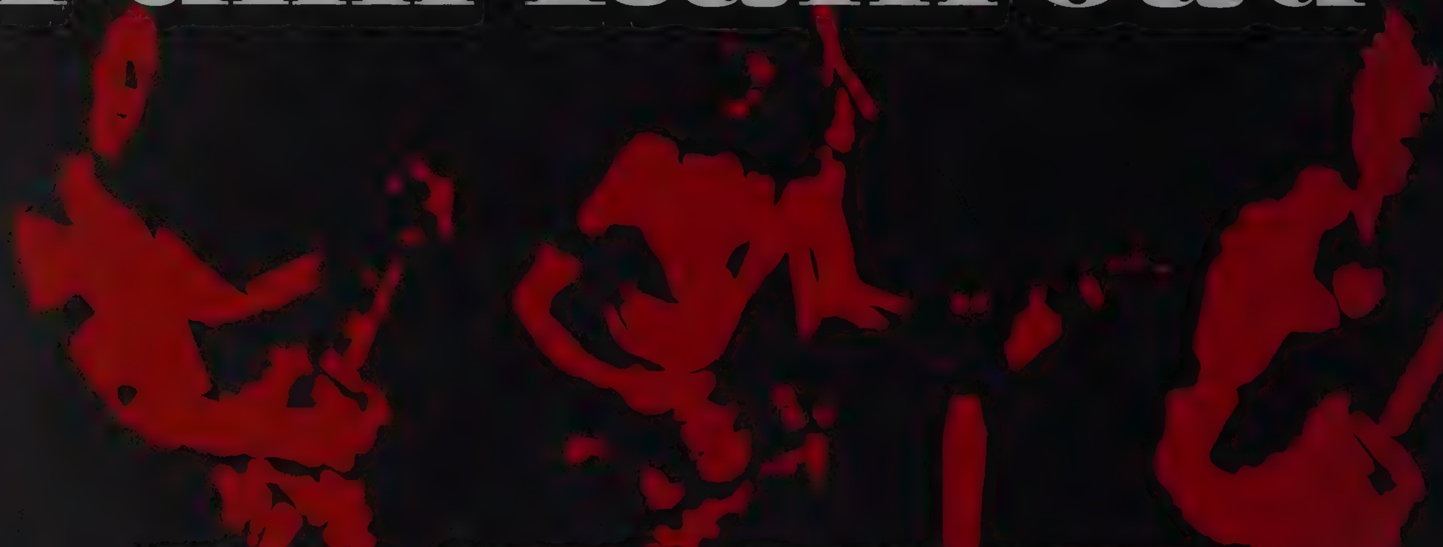
Well . . .

"Brian is dead, too!"

# CREEM


McCartney$
McCartn
OVER 127 MILLION SOLD
ME I'M THE ONE

# Grand Funk Railroad



by Debbie Burr December 1969 Photos by Charlie Auringer

*EDITOR'S NOTE: 'Member Ol' Terry Knight? Original Detroit popster DJ. With delightful Brian Jones long hair (except black) and spiffy mod clothes. Oh yeah, he knew where it was at all right. The sixth Rolling Stone, right here in Motor City. At one point he quit his job at CKLW and was off to England to go tour with the Stones. The story was that he was going to be a supporting act, singing, until he could be phased into the band itself. He was, you see, going to replace Bill Wyman. And so much prettier. Anyway, that fizzled and he came back to take on a job as program director with a radio station up in Flint. And kind of drifted out of our consciousnesses. Well, ol' staggerin' Terry's been back in town of late, and this is the story of his new thing.*

"Well, I'll tell you," says Mark Farner, pausing after the question and looking intensely into my eyes, "Detroit is a spoiled city. Spoiled. And I hate to say it but a lot of people don't know where it's at and they think they do. I'll tell you, there's a lot of beautiful people in this world. You know, like a lot of places where we've played, these people aren't afraid to get into you and appreciate what you're doing. We get up there and knock ourselves out and we expect what we give, you know. Like if we give all of ourselves we expect a little something in appreciation of that. And here they just don't seem to appreciate it like as much as when we played in Texas or Atlanta, for instance."

"Detroit has been built up. It's been socked into Detroit kids' heads that Detroit is the musical capital of the world or something," continued drummer Donnie Brewer.

"What happens is Detroit," breaks in Terry Knight, "is that they devote too much time thinking 'make it in Detroit and you can make it anywhere,' when for some odd reason, 'make it in Detroit and you can't make it anywhere.' I give them credit for trying to break out but the problem is they've isolated themselves in this area. And there are some very bad people in Ann Arbor and in Detroit that screw the kids and screw the groups. I don't want to get involved but everybody knows who they are. Anyway, that's exactly the opposite of what I did with this group and I say I because it was my decision as well as theirs. We said, if this group is going to make it they're going to make it nationally first. This group is so much bigger nationally than Detroit will probably ever be aware of . . . right now, as we sit here and talk, it's almost a shame that these kids don't know what they've got."

Last March, Mark Farner (guitarist/lead singer), Donnie Brewer (drummer) and Mel Schacher (bassist) with Terry Knight (manager and producer) formed the Grand Funk Railroad.

Mark has always been interested in music. He played the tuba (?) in high school in Flint. After a football injury to his knee and finger ("My mountain-dew finger") his mother got him a guitar for his 15th birthday. He started a group called the Gennessians, as in the country, quickly moving on to bigger and better things like Mo-Jo and the Night Walkers. "We did all the VFW Halls and shit and just passed the hat after." He switched to bass in groups like the Bossmen (with the Frost's Dick Wagner) and Terry Knight and the Pack. "I got deeper and deeper into it and I wanted to be better than anybody else. I still do. I still practice for this . . . every night."

According to some, Mark still plays guitar like a bass player with emphasis on runs, rhythmic riffs and patterns. His superiority (or super-starity) lies in his charismatic stage presence and his magnanimous voice.

Donnie Brewer is probably the most reflective and admired of the Funk, at least among other musicians. Don also started out in high school, playing bass drum with the Swartz Creek Marching Band. "Well, you know how you always start groups in high school. I got into that and things just happened from there. But I've always wanted to play drums professionally." All three Funks, being from the Flint area, they have known each other for years. "I met Mark in a band. We used to play gigs at the battles-of the-bands together." The two later played together in Terry Knight's Pack and in that group's successor, The Fabulous Pack. "The Grand Funk just basically came about because we had known each other and none of us was really happening and we thought we could do something together."

# . . . or the Great Train Robbery

On and off stage Mel Schacher is the reticent one of the three. He described his involvement in music very matter-of-factly. "My dad played the guitar. He was with Lawrence Welk and everything and I was just kind of interested in it. I started out on banjo and went from banjo to clarinet. Then all the bands really started to happen and I began to play guitar and decided to switch to bass." Mel, also from the Flint area, had known Mark and Don for a number through his involvement in different bands, one of which was Question Mark and the Mysterians (who did "96 Tears," for which they are less than revered in some circles). "They came to me and we talked about getting a group together and thought it would be the thing to do because nothing was really happening with us, individually." Asked why he always stands in the dark on stage, Schacher replied, "I love the dark. I'm the mysterious one but you better not use that word."

"We go out of our way," Knight emphasized, "to avoid mentioning their former groups. We know here, for example, in the Detroit area and in the Midwest and New York the group quote Terry Knight And The Pack and the group Question Mark And The Mysterians quote unquote were very, very big groups nationally. But unfortunately a lot of people thought they were shit groups. Yea or nay, I don't know, but the fact is both of these groups sold millions of records. So, we could go out in certain areas that count, you know, the important markets where these groups were extremely strong–you know, formerly so and so and formerly so and so, the new super-group. But, none of us wanted to take that route so that's why we try to avoid it."

Regardless of how super or unsuper the group is, it is purely unrealistic to ignore the members' former associations. Especially when you're writing in a Detroit based paper. And again especially when the former associations were with the group's present manager-producer-promoter, Terry Knight. And especially, especially since popular belief among the area's music people supports the rumor that Knight's severing of himself from the Pack was not a very cheery scene, to say the least. Both parties allegedly vowed never to have anything to do with each other again.

But Knight, of course, denies this. "Well, that's just stupid. We were never really out of touch since we split. We were always on speaking terms and things like that. I've always been interested in Donnie and his profession and in Mark and his. And I knew that if ever they were in a position, that I could do something or help do something with them. But they were going through that growing pains period, that dues period and . . . well, ultimately it just seems to have been in the stars that we were going to work together somehow."

The stars received a little help from the very down-to-earth business world. Terry's present "little trip in the business world" is that of executive producer for Capitol Records in New York. It seems that members of the Pack and Question Mark were contracted to Capitol both jointly and severally and Capitol, obviously, had dished out money to promote both of these former groups. It is also obvious that the three were not doing Capitol any good by being inactive. (The Pack had just returned from an ill-fated East Coast tour prior to the birth of Grand Funk. Boston apparently had enough of its own R&B groups and The Pack bombed.) So, Terry Knight, it has been said, "simply made the best of a bad scene."

The investment Capitol has taken on with Grand Funk is phenomenal . . . something like $125,000, in the form of advertising (the three-page Billboard ad, Knight claims, "was for Capitol Records to let the country know that we had THE group") and more than adequately comfortable traveling conditions (many trips were free gigs for the exposure). But the hype seems to be paying off as their album, On Time, is expected to be certified as a million seller within the next two weeks and 'Time Machine' is a Top 20 single all across the country. Except in Detroit.

It is interesting to note that in the midst of this, Mark still uses the same taped-up green guitar. "That's it. That's my baby."

Whether or not Terry would have ever rejoined with Mark and Don, or Capitol would have underwritten Grand Funk had the parties in question not already been legally contracted to each other is unimportant and purely speculative, at this point.

What is important, or at least significant, is the amazing job Terry must have done selling Capitol, encouraging them to take the risk and the super-hype of a group that has apparently stirred up people in all parts of the country except their home base, Detroit. He knows how to sell a product and sell it well.

The Grand Funk Railroad has been hyped. But they seem to have proved themselves worthy, at least on Capitol Records' level. I asked Terry if it was difficult getting bookings for this virtually unheard of band when they started out. "It wasn't hard getting gigs from the first night and I'll tell you why. The first night they ever played together as the Funk (in Buffalo, New York) they caused a riot on stage. A chick was so warped by the show she took off her clothes and headed for the stage. That caused so much talk about this group that they've worked steadily ever since."

The group started out going into several of the summer's pop festivals (i.e. Atlanta and Texas International) as the first act on the first day, for free to get exposure. By the second and third days they were moved to 8 p.m.

The Atlanta people have already asked them back for next years' festival at a minimum of 15 grand. (And that's no hype. I saw the letter.) After the Texas International Pop Festival, Billboard wrote of them " . . . a Detroit-based trio with individuality perfected talents fused into a tight unit of exciting projection." Of the same performance, the Arizona Republic Sun said, "The trio is certainly one of the most written-about newcomers in some time. They have been hailed as the next Cream, which is nothing in itself except that in a string of personal appearances on the pop festival route they received standing ovations and rave reviews at every performance. At the Texas International Festival the group was awarded no less than four standing ovations and two encores from a crowd of 180,000."

"We've turned down every TV show offered us so far; Music Scene, [Johnny] Carson, [Joey] Bishop, even [Ed] Sullivan. Like the Sullivan Show gets into a thing where they like them to either come on early or close the show, when you get cut or they roll the credits over you" explains Terry. "I'd like when they do the Sullivan Show to do two songs right after the 8:30 break. That's the prime time."

"We've also turned down a TV spot that would have been world wide via satellite. Just to show you where my head is at with them . . . you know, Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade is shown on all channels throughout the world and they came to Capitol and offered them a Grand Funk float and that would have meant that as the camera rolled by they'd be lip-synching or something. Well, this is exposure before hundreds of millions. But, this is the wrong kind of exposure. You know, I'm not trying to exploit the group."

You can put specta-color ads in every publication and on every highway in the country. But you can't hype an audience into feeling the music.

Any answer to the question of why Detroit people have not received the Grand Funk Railroad with open arms is completely theoretical. But, for one thing, Detroit has been flooded with so much good talent that a group must not only be exceptional but also catch the right crowd in the right mood. This, combined with a prejudice against hype generally and Terry Knight specifically, and maybe a little hard feeling for this "local" band that felt they didn't need the Ann Arbor–Detroit fans to make it, could all be contributing to Detroit's rejection of the Grand Funk. Terry claims that, "the kids didn't come to the Grande [Ballroom] last night to hear Joe Cocker or Grand Funk. It was the place to go." [EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Knight has spent much time in New York recently and little in Detroit. It seems to show.]

Or . . . maybe the audience just plain doesn't like their music.

Their music, although not particularly anything new as far as concepts go, is nonetheless distinctive and peculiar to the group. Especially since most three-piece groups follow the musical directions via Cream or Hendrix."It's just hard, hard rock," say Donnie. "We've all been influenced by everybody. Like I dig The Rascals. But there isn't anybody that stands out that we try to copy and we don't avoid trying to copy anyone, either. We just play music we like and we think the kids will like. And if it happens that some kids think we should sound like Cream, well, we're not trying to avoid it but we're not trying to do it, either."

Farner writes all the tunes or at least he writes the lyrics and gets the basic chord structure. "Then at rehearsal we jam and put what we feel should be in certain spots and get it together."

"Basically we all write the songs," adds Donnie. "It's just that he writes the original song and we arrange it."

"In my lyrics," continues Mark, "I try to use a universal language. I don't write so complicated . . . like I don't use big long words and symbols. Without the lyrics, to me music is nowhere. But, along with lyrics, the music expresses something as a whole and expresses what we feel."

These feels are also expressed, especially through Mark's stage performance. Farner (I later found out he is half Cherokee) goes through what had struck me as a similar to an Indian ceremonial dance. "I'd go on stage naked if I could. I'd go everywhere naked. I love the freedom I feel on stage cause I can do anything I want to. And I do anything I want to. I get off doing that, especially when people appreciate it. That's when I really get off. Like at Texas, after two encores, I was so stoned when I got off stage that I couldn't even walk and that's where I want to be. That's the kind of stoned I love and want to be all the time."

There are some definite future plans. Their second album is finished and will be released December 29th, preceded by the release of a single, "Mr. Limousine Driver," in about three weeks. "It's much heavier than 'Time Machine,'" says Knight and then adds, paranoically, "which is funny because like 'Time Machine' is Top 20 everywhere and who knows what happened in Detroit . . . if they're supposed to be so great what kind of Mickey Mouse record is that? Well, heh, we're not stupid, dumb people, which should be obvious by now. I mean I think we know what we're doing. We've got a hit album on the charts and a hit single and a hit group to work with. We seem to be doing something right. So, we put out a record and it was a hit record. The next record'll be a hit and so will the album."

"They'll start recording their third album in January. To do it right they'll have to restrict their personal appearances. The days are gone when you can knock off an album in a couple of weeks. We'd like to reach a point where eventually they do like two tours a year. Then when they get done they can go to the place where they practice and no one bothers them and the three can get into their little circle and work."

Right now Terry is negotiating a European and possibly an Asian tour for the Funk for early next year to correspond with the first album's release over there. "You know," Knight claims, "there never has been a super-group from the States since like Bill Haley And The Comets or Buddy Holly And The Crickets, in the erea. But, from the rock music age, since The Beatles brought it around again, there never has been a super-group from this country. [What about The Doors, Airplane, Byrds, Supremes, to name just a few?] There is bound to be one sometime. It would be nice if this were the group."

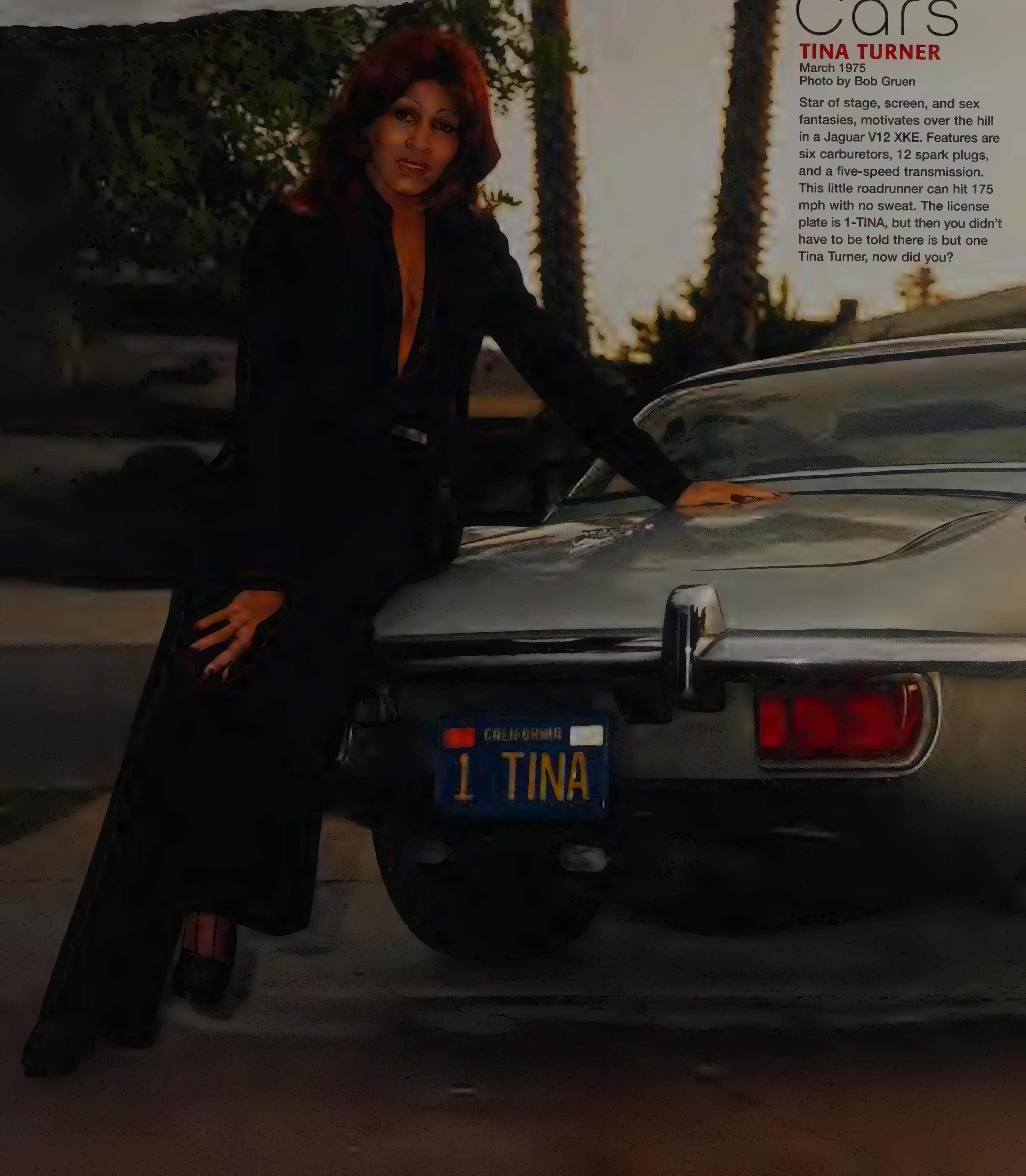
> *I saw a couple of issues again and it struck me how the visuals had a nice, fresh, spunky middle-of-America energy. The pictures of all the rock stars looked more real in CREEM than anywhere else. Pictures of Zeppelin and all, you really saw everyone sweating and Tina Turner, she looked like a black lady. Everything looked a little more real.*
>
> *—Iggy Pop*

# Star's Cars

## TINA TURNER

March 1975
Photo by Bob Gruen

Star of stage, screen, and sex fantasies, motivates over the hill in a Jaguar V12 XKE. Features are six carburetors, 12 spark plugs, and a five-speed transmission. This little roadrunner can hit 175 mph with no sweat. The license plate is 1-TINA, but then you didn't have to be told there is but one Tina Turner, now did you?



BOY HOWDY!
We're A Michigan Band

# THE MICHIGAN SCENE today!

BY DAVE MARSH, DEDAY LARENE AND BARRY KRAMER • APRIL 1970

We're a year old this month and a year older. The alternative culture is a year older too, a year further out of adolescence or a year deeper into it. Whatever, we thought to take stock of the home front as we see it; where we've been and where we are, and maybe we can draw some conclusions as to where we're going.

The alternative culture in the Detroit/Ann Arbor community is first and foremost a rock 'n' roll culture. Whatever movement we have here grew out of rock 'n' roll. It was rock 'n' roll music which first drew us out of our intellectual covens and suburban shells. We got excited by and about the music and started relating to each other on the high plane of energy that has come to be associated with our community; it is around the music that the community has grown and it is the music which holds the community together.

. . . All we've got is rock 'n' roll. Rock 'n' roll gave us immediacy, energy, release; what we were looking for. And it taught us to prize those qualities above all others and to look for them in everything else: media, politics, everything.

So we call it rock 'n' roll culture and apply it to everything; Zabriskie Point is a rock 'n' roll movie (above and beyond the soundtrack) and Woodstock Nation or Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up To Me are rock 'n' roll books. We've carried rock 'n' roll beyond a mere musical form and made it a lifestyle.

The lifestyle, like the music, is naive, crude, adolescent, simple and simplistic. Those are the reasons that we have the reputation that we have, those are the reasons that we fall into the traps that we do and those are the reasons this is occasionally the most vital music scene in Amerika. Our youthful exuberance is at once our primary asset and our greatest fault.

We must come back to the centrality of rock 'n' roll to the life of Detroit's alternative culture. Our alternative community could not exist without rock 'n' roll, because rock 'n' roll is, like we said, all we've got. Detroit's rock 'n' roll kids are rock 'n' roll kids like no kids anywhere else in the country; rock 'n' roll is uniquely central to their lives. Again, their lives are based on rock 'n' roll music. They listen to more of it, are more involved in it, have come to depend on it more than kids anywhere else. If you're a kid in Detroit you either hang out at a club or ballroom and have your free time filled by music, or you don't hang out at all.

We have to keep coming back to, and emphasizing, that central fact about Detroit; Detroit is such a unique hotbed of rock 'n' roll because the kids are so deeply involved in it. Rock 'n' roll is their whole lifestyle and they know no other. They've followed the bands around, hung out at the ballrooms, maybe played in a band or two and that's all they do. And, it bears repeating, that is because there is nothing else, at all, here to do. If you're not into rock 'n' roll, you're not into anything; if you don't hang out at the ballrooms, you don't hang out. That trite old line about "his music is his life" applies here not only to the musicians but to the audiences. There is an integral association with rock 'n' roll here, a nearly symbiotic relationship between the bands and their audiences . . .

. . . As we've said, our bands are people's bands. Similarly, we think of ourselves as a people's magazine. We want to be "professional" only in terms of our access to information and our efficiency in putting out our magazine regularly and consistently. We do not think of ourselves as professional journalists and we do not want to adopt that distant, oracular stance of professional journalists. We do not want to be another Rolling Stone. We are aware of the hazards of a self-conception. We would not turn CREEM into an ingroupish trade paper even if we could. We have seen the counter-productive effects of cliquishness on our community and we do not wish to export that.

We hope to bring a fresh, vital, high energy perspective to bear on our culture. We are a rock 'n' roll magazine, with all that that implies. Our culture is a rock 'n' roll culture. We are rock 'n' roll people. We've been doing this for a year, and we're getting better at it, but we're nowhere near as good at it as we think we can be. We don't want to be slick, but we do want to get tighter and faster. That's what we want everybody to be, and we hope we can all do it.

## THE MICHIGAN BANDS

A family album . . . not all of our bands, but some that come to mind, and what's been happening with them in the last year.

### MC5

Very simply, the Five are the most important band to come out of Detroit. There's really no way to explain how important this band has been to Detroit. They set the pace for our rock 'n' roll explosion, they formed the model of the people's band, they made high energy the byword of our music. They epitomize all our best and worst points. A year ago it looked like they, and we, stood on the threshold of a meteoric rise to glory. Their Elektra album had just been released, they were starting to carry the high-energy jams to people all over the country, and the rest of the country was starting to focus its attention on Ann Arbor and Detroit. It looked like Detroit and the Five could be the revitalizing, resensifying force that an increasingly sterile national scene needed. We haven't really fallen on our faces, but we haven't seen the jihad either, and now some people are saying that the Five have forgotten their roots. But all things being equal, the MC5 are still the best rock 'n' roll band in the country, even if they are no longer the catalyzing force they once were. We've all been hit hard by the end of innocence. Fuck!

### COMMANDER CODY & HIS LOST PLANET AIRMEN

The Commander and his crew are Michigan's first great export band. They played for some time around the Ann Arbor area; a lazy, country-influenced brand of primitive rock 'n' roll/boogie music, but there were so few places around here suitable for their kind of entertainment (the band has never done what you might call a super-tight, exciting stage show, has never been particularly loud or very professional) that they decided if they were going to be starving they might as well starve where it's warm, and moved to Berkeley. There they amassed quite a following among the older, wine-drinking, laying back type freaks (the same kind of good time people that loved them in Michigan, but do not exactly abound hereabouts), got a "real" drummer for the first time and started working seriously on their music. Although there is now a well-established Commander Cody cult in the Bay Area, there aren't that many places to play out there either and so now they've apparently decided that if they're going to be starving, they might as well starve in Ann Arbor, where they're most comfortable, weather and all. Welcome back, men.

### THE RATIONALS

Probably the oldest band still kicking on the Motor City scene, the Rationals took seven years to put out one of the finest albums the Detroit renaissance has yet seen. Integrally involved with rhythm and blues for a long period, the group's success as a local band was unprecedented until the surge upwards of the MC5 under John Sinclair. They had two local hit records, "Respect" and "I Need You," long before there was any progressive rock/community-oriented radio to help it along. The group's sound is based on Scott Morgan's voice, which is among the strongest in rock, and an interweaving of rhythm styles. They've half-moved away from oldline R&B—though one side of their album (The Rationals, Crewe) is devoted to blues—into a fusion of rhythm/melodies comparable, in some ways, to Dr. John. Yet, despite being together for so long, the band is remarkably young; bassist Terry Trabandt is only twenty and the rest are twenty-one. Their first hit, "Respect," was recorded when they were sixteen.

### AMBOY DUKES

Ted Nugent, the constant factor of the everchanging Amboy Dukes, is one of the most eccentric and also most often misinterpreted rock 'n' roll figures on the Detroit scene. This very eccentricity, and Nugent's extraordinary ideas, are well developed in the Dukes music. Riding for a while on the success of "Journey to the Center of the Mind" and backing it up with their baffling live performances, the Dukes have become favorites in the Midwest, Chicago, New York and parts of the south. A technically precise and religiously devoted guitarist, Nugent has seen all stages in the personnel development of the group which seem to partially coincide with the Dukes three albums, thus making each a little different. Now, with their recently released disk, Marriage, at the crucial point of making it or breaking, the band is unfortunately going through changes again with drummer Dave Palmer leaving the group to become an engineer.

### BROWNSVILLE STATION

The Brownsville Station sure have a good time while making their self-titled "pizza music" onstage. And they can generally pass these good feelings on to the audience (Cubbie's Iggy Stooge imitation for example). Doing the '50s rock is often looked upon as a shuck or an easy way out. But, the Brownsville Station are sincere in their music and feel there were a lot of fields left unexplored in the evolution of music from the '50s to the '70s. Their single, "Rock 'n' Roll Holiday" on Hideout Records, was quickly picked up by all the local stations and attracted Polydor Records, who have signed the Brownsville Station and will be distributing their single nationally. They're presently touring the South, where the record has been breaking on a number of AM stations.

MC5

THE RATIONALS

AMBOY DUKES

MC5: LENI SINCLAIR; THE RATIONALS: TOM WRIGHT; AMBOY DUKES: CREEM PHOTO ARCHIVE

### FRIJID PINK

The incredible initial success of Frijid Pink is a surprise to everyone in Detroit, it seems. The Pink were a Downriver blues band when signed to a Parrot/ London contract. Their initial single "God Gave Me You," which featured an incredible vocal by Kelly Green, was considered by many to be far superior to their present Top Ten smash, "House of The Rising Sun." Their overnight rise to fame has worried a lot of people in the Motor City, but the Pink look like they can hold together on stage at this point (vocalist Green was knocked out of action with pneumonia, but he has returned). The single and album have both risen to the Top Ten in the Billboard and Cashbox charts. And in the latest Frijid Pink news, the crew expects their second album to be released June 1st.

### FROST

The Frost are one of the most workmanlike bands in Michigan. More lyrical than many Michigan bands, they still make a hard, high-energy brand of essential rock 'n' roll, and they have quite a following throughout the state. But even with two albums out on Vanguard and a third in the can, they have not really broken out into national prominence, which is surprising since their music is so wholly relatable within the mainstream of American rock 'n' roll. They've reportedly split with Vanguard, which may help them, since Vanguard never really did the kind of promotion their first two albums deserved. They could also use a manager to take over the leadership of the band's business affairs from singer/songwriter/guitar player Dick Wagner, but with nine years of experience in the rock 'n' roll business, Wagner isn't about to cede his command to just any old dude with sideburns and bellbottoms.

### 3RD POWER

After playing around for several years in various bands, Jim Craig, Drew Abbott and Jem Targal formed the 3rd Power. This past summer, after two years together, things finally began to happen for the band. First they moved to a farm in the country where they can work and live their music together. Their music began to take on a distinctive 3rd Power character and at the same time attracted an unofficial but tight and dedicated fan club. Then Vanguard sent representatives to hear the 3rd Power. They signed and have just finished an album which should be released May 1st.

### GRAND FUNK RAILROAD

This super phenomenon suddenly appeared last spring out of leftovers from Terry Knight and The Pack and Question Mark and The Mysterians. The Funk's debut at Detroit's Rock And Roll Revival last spring was a bomb, but they found their way into many of last summer's festivals and proceeded to flip out the crowds, soon becoming a familiar name on the national rock scene. The Grand Funk Railroad is almost as well known as the B&0. Because of their summer festival exposure, Capitol's promotional support and a hit single, the Funk's gigging has been nation-wide and for these reasons or others they rarely appear on the Detroit scene. Their first album, On Time, quickly made its way onto the charts and the second LP (released January '70) surpassed On Time, and both albums are presently in the top 100. But to many the group has a limited engagement on the national music scene. A consensus of critical opinion is that the talents of Mark Farner (lead guitar and vocalist) cannot help but burst free of the confining structure of the present group and he'll strike out on his own.

### SAVAGE GRACE

In January 1969 John Seanor, Ron Koss, Larry Zack and Al Jacquez formed the Savage Grace. The name is a description of their music which blends classical-jazz-rock-blues-folk into the Savage Grace sound. The sound is distinctive, yet remains diversified, open and imaginative. After a month or so of practice and incredible songwriting, the Savage Grace began to perform in the area and quickly became one of the most talked about bands on the Detroit scene. Warner/Reprise heard the talk and then heard the sound of Seanor's refined and free piano and harpsichord, Zack's precise drumming, Koss' screaming/ whispering guitar, Jacquez' lust thirsting vocals, and snatched them into a recording contract. The Grace recorded in Los Angeles in February and the album is to be released April 15. The album, which uses some experimental embellishment with the Moog synthesizer, includes "Lady Rain," "Ivy," "Come On Down" and other songs, and will preserve those favorites for Savage Grace fans.

### ALL THE LONELY PEOPLE

All the Lonely People are one of the few horn bands on the Detroit scene, but have managed to keep the tradition of raw driving Detroit music, instead of falling into the stereotyped rut of horn bands set by BS&T or Chicago. The eight musicians have been together for about a year now with the same personnel and several still find time for college between daily practices and weekend gigs. Their stage appearances are highlighted by their dynamic lead singer and keyboardist, Larry Baird, who remains in perpetual motion throughout the set. Recently signed to Vanguard Records, All the Lonely People left for New York last week to record an album whose release date is yet uncertain.

**BOB SEGER SYSTEM**

The "Ramblin' Gamblin' Man," Bob Seger has to his credit more hit singles than any other Detroit rock 'n' roller and his newest, "Lucifer," off an upcoming album, looks like it's going to be another smash. But, with his intense "heavy musical" style, soul screeching vocals and plaintive, right on lyrics, it's not at all surprising. Seger's prominence on the national music scene is due to two basic strengths—his incredible, retched-from-the-bowels-of the-soul voice and his brilliant songwriting talents. Holding a unique position on the Detroit scene, Seger continues to write hit after hit.

BOB SEGER SYSTEM

MITCH RYDER

THE STOOGES

CREEM PHOTO ARCHIVE

**THE UP**

The self-proclaimed "skinnies from murder city," macrobiotic revolutionaries the Up have stepped in for Trans-Love Energies/Youth International Party/White Panther Tribe as the number one revolutionary band in Michigan.

Led by the incredible vocals of lead singer Frank Bach and the high-energy drumming of young Scott Bailey, whose prowess at the skins is not to be believed, the Up have always had a revolutionary consciousness which at times has overshadowed their music. But, as the boys (who, besides Frank and Scott, include Bob and Gary Rassmussen on guitar/bass) have improved their music; their stance as a guerrilla/rock band in the Midwestern tradition has solidified until today they have a surprisingly large following for a group of "unknowns."

At present, the group has independently prepared a single on their own Sundance label, "Just Like An Aborigine" b/w "Hassan I Sabba." The skinniest rock 'n' roll band in the world will also travel to Miami, where they will perform and delight the audience with their destroyer renditions of high energy jams.

**CATFISH**

A little less than a year ago, a recently formed Catfish went to New York City without a gig and wound up playing a Tuesday night audition set at the Fillmore East, blowing everybody back and being signed to Epic. They hadn't played much around Michigan, but they began getting jobs all over the country. They still haven't played much in Michigan, and although they've been fantastically received everywhere else, they're anxious to build a following at home. It should be easy for them. On stage they're supremely self-confident and they'll do anything to generate excitement. Their music is hard and loud and their show is super flashy. The focus of the excitement is three-hundred pound lead singer Bob Hodge who squirms, squeals, and jumps and shouts, is truly a delight and says "This is really our home, even if the people don't know us, so we've got to get home and let the people get to know us." In short, they're a perfect Michigan band. And aware of it.

**SRC**

The SRC are truly veterans on the Detroit scene. From the days of "I'm So Glad" until the present, they have sustained a steady Midwest following. Known for their serious, hard working approach to the music business, they have set a fine example in organization for younger bands to follow. Besides making their music, the SRC have been involved in community affairs (festivals and benefits) and are in the process of building complete studio facilities in Ann Arbor. They recorded and produced their recently released third Capitol album, Travelers Tale themselves and are presently working on a new single. During the next two months, the SRC will be playing various dates across the U.S. and Canada to promote Traveler's Tale.

**TEEGARDEN & VAN WINKLE**

Teegarden & Van Winkle were a pleasant surprise on the Detroit scene. They migrated to the Motor City from Tulsa, Oklahoma and have infiltrated our music with a touch of folksiness and a little cracker barrel humor. What this two-man band can do with just an organ and drums (especially in the day of the electric guitar) is just amazing. Their popularity is partly due to the "parlor entertainment" atmosphere they create on stage. The duo is presently working on their third album, that will not be on Atco Records, which released their first two.

**MITCH RYDER AND THE DETROIT WHEELS**

Long removed from the Detroit scene (since he was with Billy Lee and the Rivieras in the mid-'60s) the return of Mitch Ryder to his home, with a new band and a return to his high-energy stage show, is a pleasant surprise.

"We had to come back to Detroit to find what we'd lost in New York," Ryder reported and he seems to have done just that. A new band, centering around drummer John Badanjek, an original Wheel, a pair of excellent hornmen in Mike McClellan and Chuck Florence and an ace rhythm section including Boot Hill, piano, Ray Goodman, guitar and Tony "Tuna" Suhy on bass.

Ryder seems to have lost none of his excellence as a master showman and dynamic vocalist while drummer Badanjek is still the funkiest white drummer in rock 'n' roll. The band looks like it could be headed back to the top.

**THE STOOGES**

Iggy and the boys set the world on its ass with their incredible first record, The Stooges (Elektra); Iggy dances and sings the way you always wished you could, a prancer, a rock 'n' roll Nureyev without equal. Lately, people have been relating his tactics to "multisex" erotica though it really is just the Detroit/Ann Arbor area's finest extension of the rock 'n' roll lead singer in the Jagger/ Morrison tradition.

The band itself is super-involved with callisthenic exercises in electro-guitar technology. The Stooges have tightened up their stage show, and music in general, in the last couple of months and people may soon begin to see what happens when the world's most psychedelic band meets Led Zeppelin. Or somethin' like that.

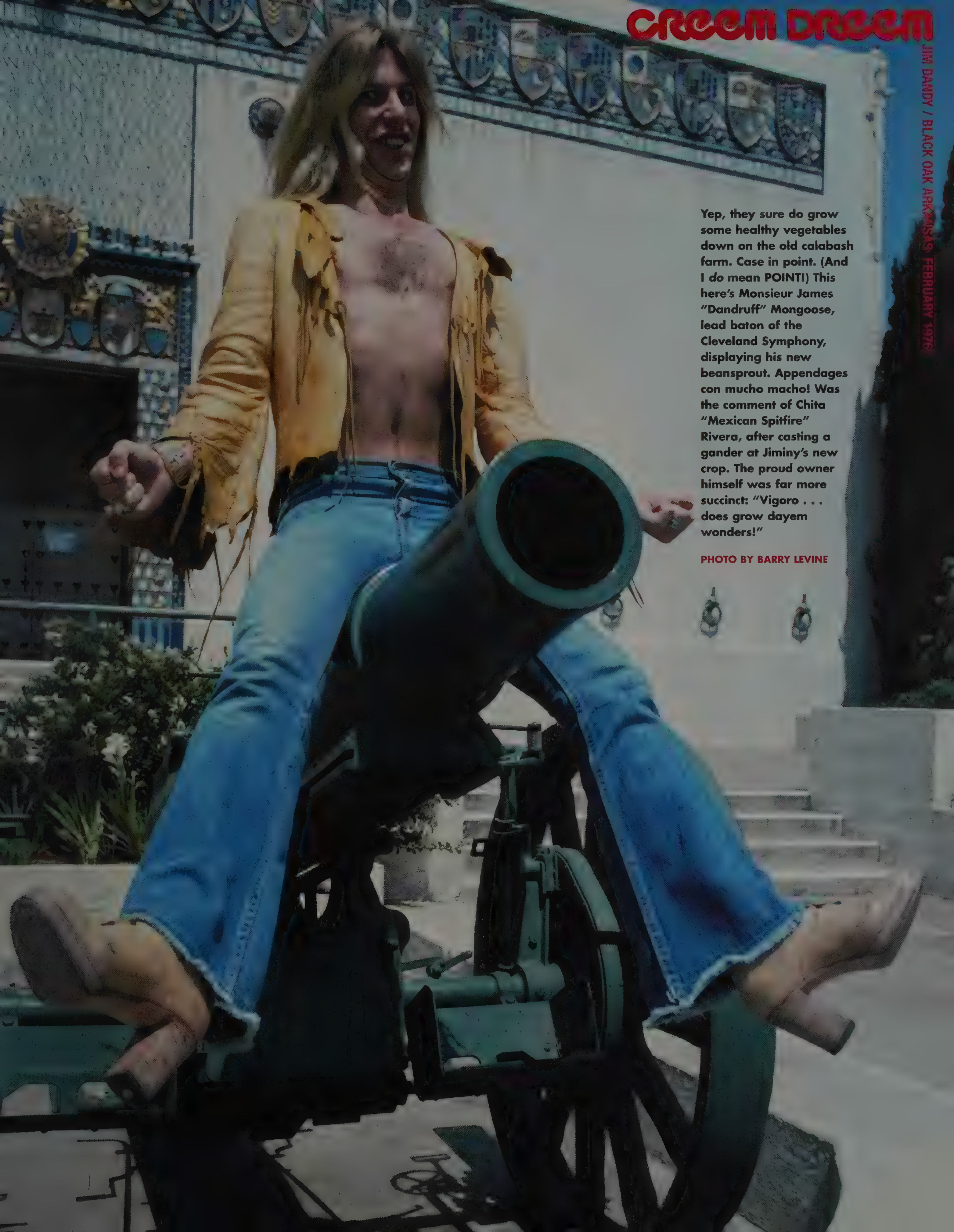
Lead guitarist Ron Asheton has begun to step into his own of late, becoming both more proficient on the more traditional aspect of guitar work and also polishing his already advanced attack on the technological limits of feedback/wah-wah/ waves of energy.

The latest news from Stoogedom includes a new rhythm guitarist, Bill Cheatham, who will begin appearing with the band shortly, and a west coast album session/tour, their first. They've already received stares and shouts of approval on the east coast and in New England.

Yet the Stooges have changed in the last year or so since they cut the first album. And there's no way to explain that except to say you shoulda seen 'em when they was weird. ■

# CREEM DREEM

JIM DANDY / BLACK OAK ARKANSAS FEBRUARY 1976



**Yep, they sure do grow some healthy vegetables down on the old calabash farm. Case in point. (And I *do* mean POINT!) This here's Monsieur James "Dandruff" Mongoose, lead baton of the Cleveland Symphony, displaying his new beansprout. Appendages con mucho macho! Was the comment of Chita "Mexican Spitfire" Rivera, after casting a gander at Jiminy's new crop. The proud owner himself was far more succinct: "Vigoro . . . does grow dayem wonders!"**

**PHOTO BY BARRY LEVINE**

# MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN

*Joe Cocker's famed Mad Dogs and Englishmen tour kicked off in Detroit. CREEM staffers Dave Marsh and Ric Siegel witnessed the band's rehearsal and performance at Detroit's Eastown Theatre*

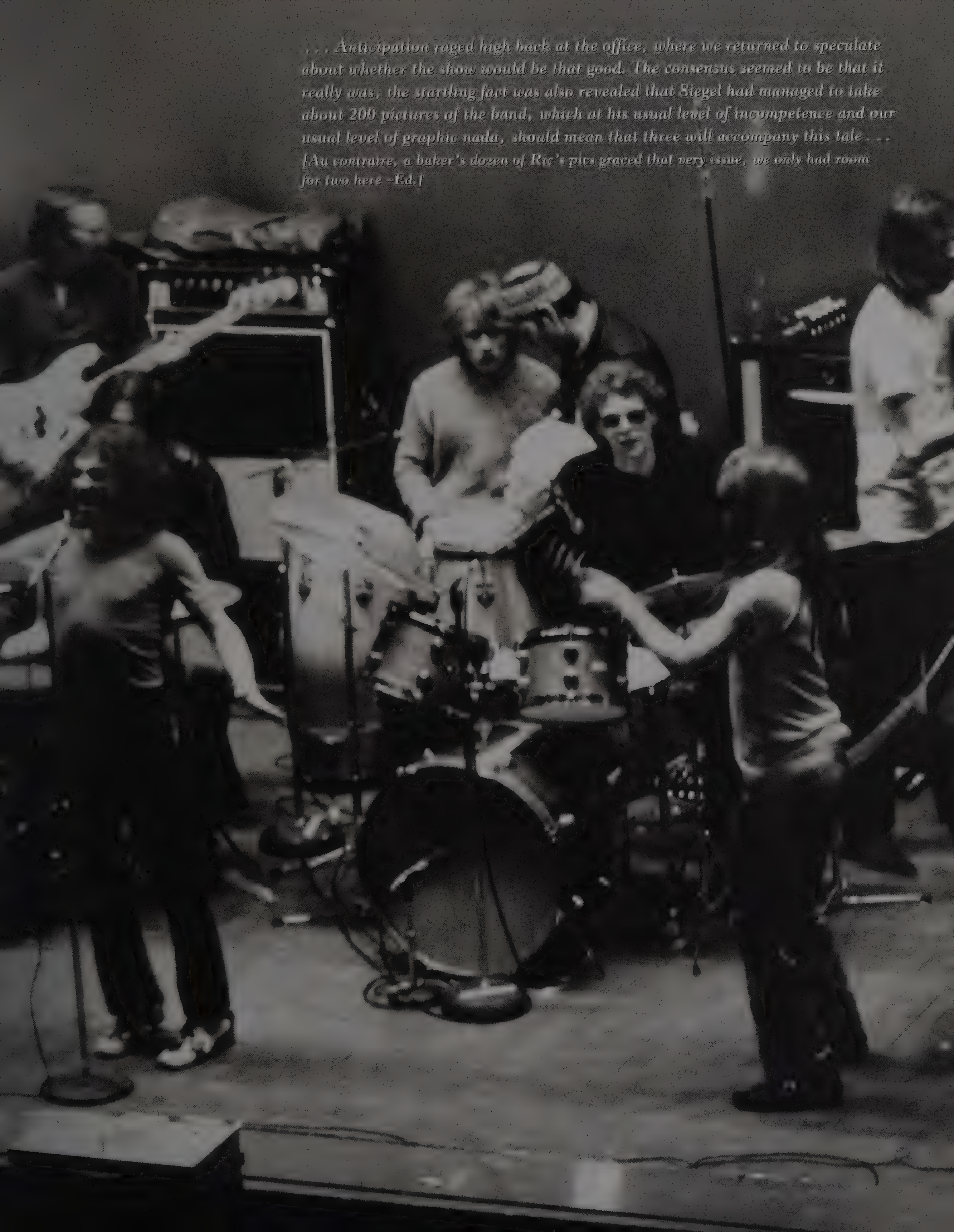
BY DAVE MARSH • MAY 1970 • PHOTOS BY RIC SIEGEL

## LEARNIN' TO LIVE TOGETHER

The minute they walked out the atmosphere in the ballroom changed. I mean here was Leon Russell looking absolutely outrageous in his red white and blue Mick Jagger top hat and his red, white and blue striped pants and blue Holy Trinity jersey over a gold sweatshirt (the reverse of the afternoon's attire) and a skin vest over it all and his black and gold striped hair. And Joe Cocker, tie-dyed and beer bellied with the choir looking like they wanted the robes they had to leave behind (because there wasn't time to get them out of the cleaners—really) and *two* drummers and a conga player and Chris Stainton hidden way in

*. . . Anticipation raged high back at the office, where we returned to speculate about whether the show would be that good. The consensus seemed to be that it really was; the startling fact was also revealed that Siegel had managed to take about 200 pictures of the band, which at his usual level of incompetence and our usual level of graphic nada, should mean that three will accompany this tale . . .*

*[Au contraire, a baker's dozen of Ric's pics graced that very issue, we only had room for two here –Ed.]*



*"The really obvious tad of information we picked up was the story about the next album, recorded live at the Fillmore East, of course. A kind of monument to a band that is planned to self-destruct." Clockwise from the keyboard: Leon Russell, Joe Cocker, Bobby Jones, Matthew Moore, Rita Coolidge, Nicol Barclay, Claudia Lannear, Canina, Don Preston*

the back switching from piano to organ when necessary and Carl Radle looks like he lives in the Badlands with a capital BAD, like a 1970 Jesse James with a lowslung bass guitar. I mean, it was somethin' ELSE.

The opening tune was "Honky Tonk Woman," a shade blacker than the Stones, Leon playing guitar, which he is almost as good at as piano. Then smash, bang into a Cocker trademark number, "Let's Go Get Stoned," and you know it's not Ray Charles whiskey he's discussing . . .

"She Came In Through The Bathroom Window" was probably written, consciously or not, for Joe Cocker, and it fits the end of "Stoned" even better than it fits the end of "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" on the *Joe Cocker* album. Joe Cocker, the conductor and controller of a twenty-piece band, has had to douse a few of the pyrotechnics, but he still sings better than *anybody* you're liable to see this weekend.

Leon leaps behind the piano for "Bird On The Wire," Chris jumps behind the organ, not wasting a second. It seems a bit draggy on the instrumental end, though, but the choir is really ace. It's too bad, but Cocker just can't get the release here that he does elsewhere. He seems to be holding a little bit back on this number. From there on in, though, everything's an up.

"Cry Me A River" is a simply tremendous arrangement; it's strange to find songs that you wouldn't have thought anyone could resurrect from the garbage heap of mediocrity in Cocker's set, as vital and ballsy as any of the others. Maybe more so.

Rita Coolidge stepped out, looking ice-cool, for a song that I didn't take down the name of, which she did magnificently. Her hair fell down the middle of her back in a pair of Pocahontas braids while Denny Cordell stood in back and ran the mixer and Canina ran about on stage. People seemed to smile a lot; that just might sum up the whole set.

The audience wasn't too happy, though. Cocker hadn't done one hit yet, at least not any of *his* hits, and they seemed upset, calling out for him to do "Dear Landlord," "Delta Lady" or "A Little Help From My Friends." "We're trying to do everyone's favorites," Joe remarked to the crowd, and they seemed to dig him. Or at least the ethos, 'cause on the next number they flipped out and stamped their feet and clapped their hands and shit.

The tune was "Space Captain," done at least 92 times better than the single. If Leon Russell didn't write this tune (I've not seen the record, only heard it) somebody's already copping his style. It started off with Joe and Leon alone, singing about how "We're just learnin' to live together 'til we die." Then the choir jets in . . . WHEW!!!

For "Feelin' Alright," Leon shucked his vest and switched to guitar while Chris played piano. The audience just sort of clapped along; this is Joe's trademark song with them. But it's transformed by the choir so that it's not a bit stale or stylized. And, surprise surprise, Joe cocker digs his band; almost as much as a whole lot of them, one suspects, idolize him. With good reason on both ends. ■

CHARLIE AURINGER

# A CREEM FOUNDING FATHER REMEMBERS

The first two issues of CREEM were put together in the basement of Mixed Media, one of several book/record/head shops owned by founding publisher Barry Kramer. The young entrepreneur had seen "head shops" open in LA and NY and brought the concept to Detroit.

At various times, mostly overlapping, Barry ran three stores—two on Wayne State University's campus and one in Ypsilanti. He also hosted a weekly rock 'n' roll radio show called "Tea Party" on WABX—a station that was to become a pioneer in underground broadcasting. I remember he once played "My Generation" 37 times in a row. He managed three bands, including Mitch Ryder's Detroit. He tried his hand at concert promotion and as a booking agent. He was also a master manipulator and a crazy motherfucker.

After those first two issues, we moved into the office building, which we lovingly dubbed "The CREEM Complex." It was a three-story office building in the Cass corridor—yes, inner city Detroit, but near enough to Wayne State to be part of the creative community.

As I remember it, co-founder, photographer, and art director, Charles Auringer was about to rent part of the facility for a photo studio/loft when Kramer saw it and took over most of the building as headquarters for their new publishing venture and his various other businesses.

At street level, several mostly vacant storefronts were rented from time to time to businesses like a record store and a beauty parlor. If you were in on the secret, you could gain access to the upper floors by pressing the buzzer next to a black door at the north end of the building or through the back door of a wood-frame house built onto the office building that was home to Charlie Auringer, Davey Marsh and various band members. Or, it turns out, you could gain access through the second floor windows of the abandoned building next door—which prompted the Barry to burn it down one day when no deadlines were pressing.

The rooms on the second floor of the substantial, reinforced concrete building—built and occupied in the early 1900s by an architect responsible for many of Detroit's major old buildings—had 12-foot ceilings, and the windows fronting Cass ran almost floor to ceiling, with low sills that were perfect for lounging; "watching the river flow" I used to call it. Our neighborhood had lots of action to watch. We were on the "stroll," so hookers and other street people frequently hung around the area to enjoy the sounds constantly blasting from our digs. The regular police decoy operations were also entertaining—we'd try to warn the tricks without getting ourselves in trouble.

Anyway, if you were buzzed in the non-descript black door, and climbed the marble steps, you could enter our lobby. The first door to your left was Barry's office, beautifully furnished (by the architect we assumed) with built-in shelves, counters and cabinets and paneled in mahogany. Besides his and his secretary's not so beautiful funky old desks, the room contained an antique barber's chair where one could relax and enjoy the spectacle.

The living room next door featured a sound system. The layout was done in an adjacent room that featured a walk-in safe that was repurposed as a darkroom. But the heart of the complex was the editorial office, which was the scene of many battles—fists, phones and typewriters were thrown.

*—Ric Siegel*

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")

CHARLIE AURINGER

# TODD RUNDGREN

**HOME:** Somewhere/Anywhere (U.S.A.)

**AGE:** In light years?

**PROFESSION:** Producing somebody else's records.

**HOBBIES:** Recording his own records.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *I Led 3,486 Lives.*

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** While waiting for Mark Farner to tune his guitar, reconstructed the entire universe out of popsicle sticks.

**QUOTE:** " . . . and so you see . . . um . . . er . . . what was I talking about?"

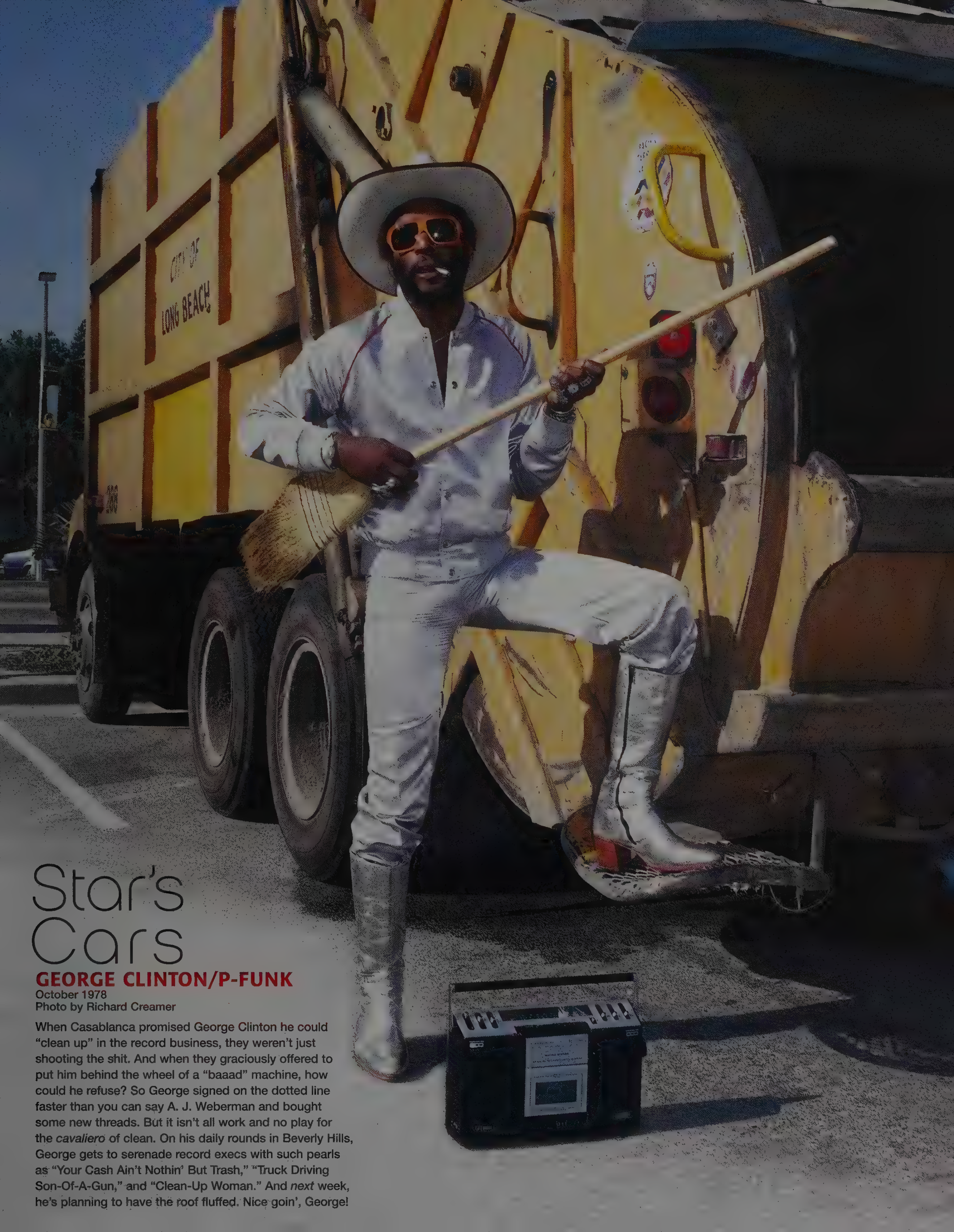
**PROFILE:** Standard case history. Mother drops child on head, child henceforth suffers from persistent and seemingly real hallucinations. These delusions of grandeur have led to fits of irrational behavior: has been known to dye hair in clashing colors, spent all the money he made mowing lawns on funny clothes. Might be harmless enough if other children are never allowed to see him. Actually believes that man can fly!

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

BOY HOWDY!
Creem

***Authentic*** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**



# Star's Cars

## GEORGE CLINTON/P-FUNK

October 1978
Photo by Richard Creamer

When Casablanca promised George Clinton he could "clean up" in the record business, they weren't just shooting the shit. And when they graciously offered to put him behind the wheel of a "baaad" machine, how could he refuse? So George signed on the dotted line faster than you can say A. J. Weberman and bought some new threads. But it isn't all work and no play for the *cavaliero* of clean. On his daily rounds in Beverly Hills, George gets to serenade record execs with such pearls as "Your Cash Ain't Nothin' But Trash," "Truck Driving Son-Of-A-Gun," and "Clean-Up Woman." And *next* week, he's planning to have the roof fluffed. Nice goin', George!

# Mitch Ryder

There are a million tiny towns and humble hamlets in the heartland of Amerika that the common rock 'n' roll story never deals with. Down in the very belly of the beast, in the Confederacy that never was and still is, few rock 'n' roll bands dare to tread; oh, there's the *de rigueur* Florida gigs in the collegiate towns and the occasional pop festival here and there. But basically, the rock 'n' roll scene in the South is ignored and, more, shunned like the plague.

As a consequence, when the opportunity arose to tour with Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels for a late spring month and a half presented itself, I went with an admittedly clinical perspective. Here was a chance to climb out of my media enmeshed world and see what the real populous of Babylon was all about. And, as Amerika adopts a more and more Southern ambience, the chance to visit the home of the honk presented itself as one not to be shunted aside so readily. What is Amerika really like?

Unfortunately, it's just about what we all expected. Amerikan people are the most isolated people I've ever seen, anywhere. Isolated in a way I never would have thought possible, with no idea of what things are like in the big cities that are totally foreign to them, totally unaware of any mass movement of youth save for its outward accoutrements (hair and dope and rock). A peasant in the middle of Turkey knows more about the real state of affairs on the planet than some dude in the middle of Alabama. In contrast to our daily exposure to the Amerikan Ruse, the southern middle Amerikan (who is rapidly becoming the exemplification of *all* middle Amerikans) still hangs on to the Amerikan Dream. Shaky though it may be, it's all they've got and they're going to hold onto it for a long, long time.

Similarly, Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels occupy an all too common position in the spectrum of rock 'n' roll. Once all the way to the top, playing the real glamour circuit of rock, they're now in the final stages, hopefully, of playing that endless small town, college, night club, armory, teen club, gymnasium circuit that's Limbo for rock's fallen stars. I say hopefully because they seem to be getting it back together. And once again, it seemed like a last opportunity to see something that really shouldn't be missed.

. . . So we packed our bags and off we went; ten extremely freaky—one might even say bizarre—freeks in one extremely freaky, if slightly used, '67 Fleetwood limousine accompanied by a ubiquitous U-Haul truck that seemed determined to make it between no two stops without repairs. In the next six weeks, we'd see more than any of us like to contemplate of redneck, northern Florida, the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. Intrepidly, we set out to view the heartland of Amerika that none of us can really bring ourselves to believe in or trust anymore. No *Easy Rider* trip this. For all but me it was a business proposition, pure and simple. Survival.

Through Mississippi and into Alabama, then a quick midnight run to the Montgomery Holiday Inn; up the next morning, the band all drift into one of the rooms to rehearse with the practice mini-amps. Entering the dining room for lunch, the band flips out; the fuckin' place is full of freeks! It turns out to be an MGM film crew, doing location shots for a flick on the Southern prison system.

Rapping to a waitress, "This ain't a bad place to live, I guess," she said. "But did you ever see a movie called *Easy Rider*? It's just like that." Had she ever heard of a place called the Copa Club? Eyes wide, she replied, "Yeah, but I wouldn't go anywhere *near* there."

Out of necessity, we did, that's where the gig was. The band unanimously declared the place the "greasepit of the year." "Fuckin' guys would come in with shit on their boots," Johnny [Badanjek] recalled, "sit around the pool table, drinkin' pitchers of beer, slappin' us on the back and sorta tellin' us that we'd better be good."

The club, a purple-painted cinder block affair, was one of those private establishments that only admits members; of course, they sold memberships at the door. It was situated in the middle of a total Tennessee Williams set. Ramshackle houses lined a dusty dirt road, the smell of rubbish burning filing the hundred-plus degree air.

The Copa was run by what must have been the hottest chick in Alabama thirty years ago. She was, also, incidentally the chief of police's sister. She kept barging in what was called the dressing room, to catch a glimpse of some young buns and say, "I sure wish I was about ten years younger." We'd drawn twice as many "members" as the room could hold; by the time Strawberry Alarm Clock finished their set, the room was filled with beer-swillers, backs to the walls and standing atop one another. Mini-skirted waitresses scurried about, hustling drinks, tips and customers. The back door hung open and the under-age teeny boppers of this good Alabama town hung about to catch a glimpse of the rock 'n' roll stars, performing on a stage barely big enough to accommodate Arnold Stang, let alone seven musicians, plus instruments. The whole sweaty scene was conceived by Faulkner, produced by Fellini and cast by Russ Meyer. Your average Southern teetotaler gets drunker than most any other being on the planet; the ones that drink know ho to be *really* obscene and obnoxious.

Trapped with us in the whole sordid mess was the Strawberry Alarm Clock, as far from "Incense and Peppermints" as they'll ever get, here amid the challenging requests for "Heroin" and "The Pusher."

The Alarm Clock were much, much deeper into the Southern tour thing than we were; they'd been on tour for forty consecutive days and were more than a bit dazed and confused by it all.

The club cleared out after Mitch's set and the Alarm Clock did their second show of the night to a sparse crowd of less than a dozen, un-rabid spectators. After they were done, I sat down with their lead guitarist who told us the group's story over a couple beers, filled us in on the practices o Southern booking agents (better known as rock 'n' roll criminals) and added that the group had just done a movie that totally summed up the Copa crowd at its apex. The movie was Russ Meyer's totally degrade *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*; after I'd seen it, I knew what he meant.

The Alarm Clock had been driving three to five hundred miles a day for over thirty days now. All the money was going back to L.A. to pay off some bills, so they could go back home and get their shit together again. They sure were the most depressed L.A. boys I've ever seen.

After the bad night at the Copa, the trek continued on, through Alabama countryside and a torrent of rain. Ditches filled up and the entire storm provided too much for the ever-lagging U-Haul. It coughed out a rod and we ground to a halt, five miles from no town at all.

While we were waiting for U-Haul, Inc. to come through with their johnny-on-the-spot service and make the truck exchange, we split for the nearest truck stop. We came upon a grocery store with gas pumps and pulled in, out of the rain. The store was run by a typical Southern couple. Since we had two and a half hours to kill, we became good friends. For a change, they asked *us* if we were musicians, and discovering that not only were we musicians but that we were Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels, the woman was genuinely thrilled.

# and the Detroit Wheels

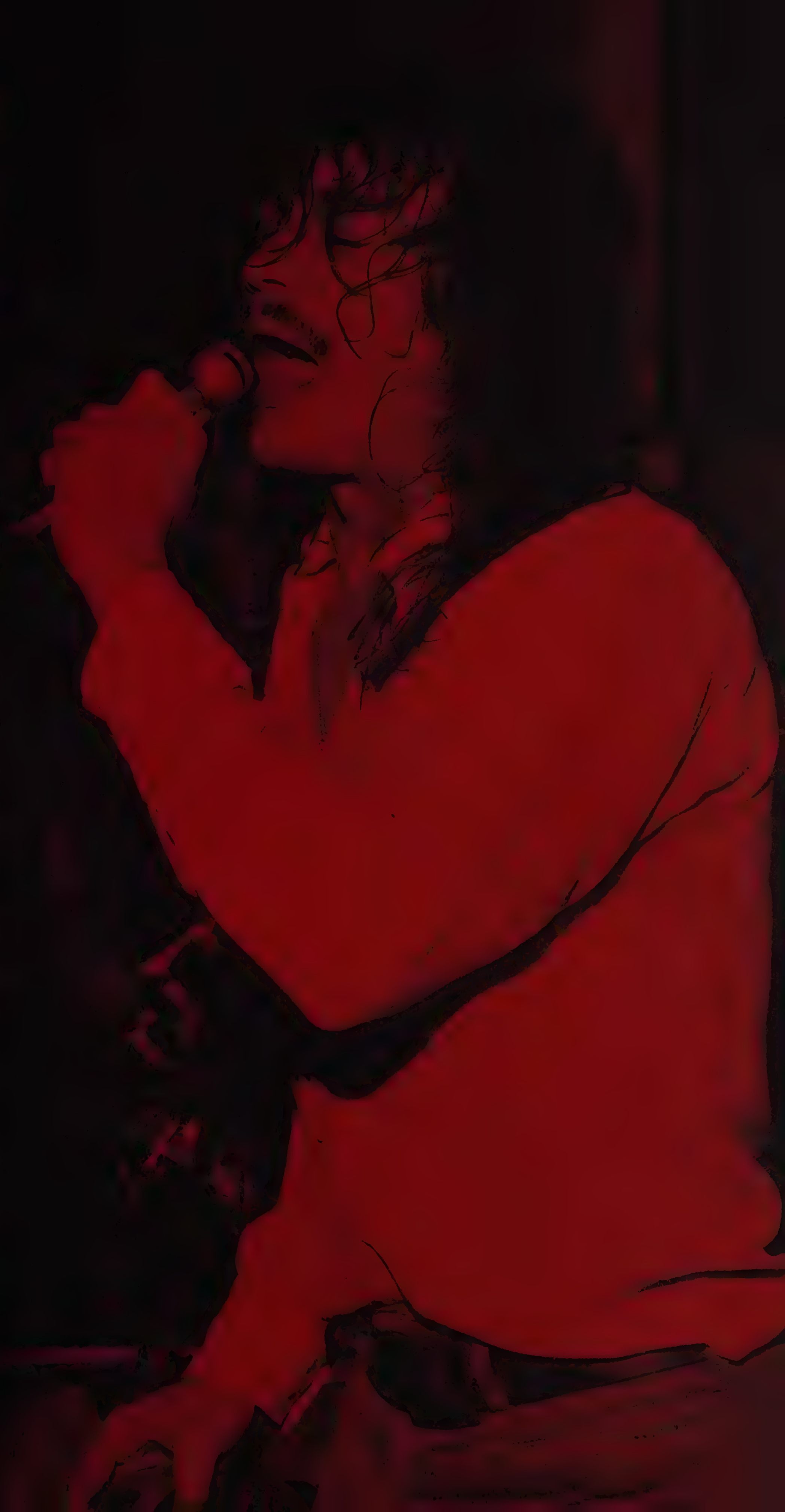
WHEELS ON THE ROAD
BY BARRY KRAMER • AUGUST 1970
PHOTO BY ROBERT MATHEU

"My son had all your records," she said. "He had a band around here. Played lead guitar." Then she added, with more than a trace of resignation, "But he was killed in Viet Nam last week. That's his guitar for sale, up there on the wall. He was a really great fan of yours."

We went on to play in some 23 Southern towns, more colleges, army and navy bases full of horny servicemen, and a few more clubs, including the spectacular Shangri-La Club, somewhere in North Carolina. The Shangri-La was run by Sarge, a 23-year Army veteran, who learned a lot about young boys in the Army. But he was cool and even gave us a couple cases of beer. It was there, at the sweaty Shangri-La, located equidistant from six military bases (the only rationale for its incredibly remote locale), that the most high-energy set ever performed by a rock 'n' roll group occurred.

Somewhere in the middle of the second set, people started flying; one chick flew past us, feet flying, slamming into tables and walls. Half the audience barged into the fight, half continued watching the band. It was an incredible 15-minute flying free-for-all. The cause was some dude's return from Viet Nam, coupled with his discovery that his woman wasn't his woman anymore – she was there with her new husband, all of 'em drunker'n'a bitch. Bouncers in North Carolina, by the way, join a fight not to stop it, but to end it. As a matter of fact, the music had much to do with sustaining the energy level of the battle; as soon as the set was over, ending of course with "Sock It To Me," the brawl stopped. It was a scene straight out of John Wayne.

From there it was only a half-dozen gigs 'til home. We really had discovered Amerika, learned a lot about its people, especially the kids, brought the people something they really needed, but with a little luck (and an album and a single on the way) we won't have to do it again.



# CREEM™

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")

CHARLIE AURINGER

## J. GEILS BAND

**HOME:** Beantown, U.S.A.

**AGE:** Old enough to know how.

**PROFESSION:** Croupiers of Overjive.

**HOBBIES:** A talent both generalized and specific for promoting celestial ecstasy in the nymphets of 5 continents.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *Fear And Loathing In Fargo, N.D.* by Akbar del Piombo (Olympic Press).

**QUOTE:** "Grease your lips, and get ready, 'cuz we're gonna do a valve job on ya. We may be fay, sho ain't gay, but that greaseball mambo has got us in its sway."

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Kicking the Brylcreem habit.

**PROFILE:** These beantown getdowns, when provoked, have been known to produce massive cases of uncontrollable shuggabugga. They have developed a marvelous talent for memorizing the entire lyrics to the theme songs of: *Car 54, Where Are You*, *Hazel* and *Divorce Court*. These boys also possess a genuine warmth for 15 year old girls.

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

BOY HOWDY!
CREEM

***Authentic*** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**

J. GEILS BAND

# BEANTOWN GET-DOWN

BY BEN EDMONDS • MARCH 1971 • PHOTO BY WENDY E. LOMBARDI

**IF YOU DON'T** have the J. Geils Band album, don't try to talk to me about what's happening.

January 17, 1970 would have been its fourth birthday, but that hardly matters now. The Boston Tea Party is no more. Since the beginning of time (or so it now seems) the Tea Party was the one place in Boston where name brand rock 'n' roll entertainment could be found. Day-glo palaces (the Psychedelic Supermarket, the Crosstown Bus, and countless others that never got beyond the initial stages of delusion came and went in whispers, but the Tea Party, with its talent solidarity and comparatively unoffensive presentation, had attained a position of relative institutionalization. The final door-closing found the club located on Lansdowne Street in the shadow of Fenway Park (the home of the Red Sox, baseball's answer to the Denver Broncos) on the site of another of Boston's ill-fated rock emporiums, the Ark. (The Ark, it will be remembered, was a tasteless attempt to bring an Electric Circus to Boston, not realizing that Boston's basic charm stems from her insistence on historical personality and consequent resistance to all but organic face-lifts.)

Before the Tea Party assimilated the Ark, however, it was located on Berkely Street in the South End. The South End is that section of the city where the buildings have decayed just a shade past the point of respectable tradition, and is therefore doomed to serve as a receptacle for those too poor to move out of the city and too defeated to even entertain dreams of ever doing so. It was in the Magnus Hall, a beautifully grotesque old monolith with spectacularly high ceilings and "Praise ye The Lord" still inscribed over the altar converted into a stage, and it was here that many of Boston's fondest rock memories were made.

In the days when the rest of the country didn't particularly want them, the Velvet Underground were always at home in Boston, and the warm acceptance they found at the Tea Party served as a relaxed launching pad for the propulsion of their delayed-action rocket. Warhol & Crew would often fly down from New York for the gigs, bringing with them a special magic which was always somehow more palatable in a New England context than it was on its oppressive home soil. The MC5 made the Tea Party the first stop on their initial Eastern swing (second-billed to the Velvets), leaving countless destroyed heads and a permanent home-form-home in their wake. Performances by the Who at the Tea Party called for a considerably greater expenditure of energy than they've displayed in the last two years. The ballroom was the site of the only public performance by the now-legendary Magic Terry & The Universe, an exposition of rock insanity so advanced that it caused club manager Don Law to flip even farther out than when he unwittingly booked the Stooges for their first Boston gig (and you should have seen the look on his face that night!). The Tea Party also played an important part in the development of the J. Geils Band, a band as steeped in the funky rock mythology of Boston as was the Tea Party itself.

**THE ROOTS OF** what is now known as the J. Geils Band can be traced to Worcester, Massachusetts and a jug band called "Snoopy And The Sopwith Camel." Worcester is like any number of faceless semi-cities in the Bay State (places like Fall River, Springfield and New Bedford): depressing municipalities living in the shadow of faded industrial glory; the kind of places you live in only until you can scrape together busfare to Boston. It was here that J. Geils began picking up on the blues (probably because there was nothing better to do in Worcester at the time), a direction inspired by the disintegration of the jug band, joined in his pursuits by young Danny Klein and Magic Dick.

The early summer of 1967 found them escaping the Worcester stranglehold into the fast-flourishing electric blues scene of Boston/Cambridge. They gained modified house band status at the Unicorn, a folky club experimenting with the possibilities of electric music (both Jefferson Airplane and Spirit made their Boston debuts there). The J. Geils Blues Band at this time consisted of J. on lead guitar, Danny on bass, Dick (who now called himself "Pittsfield Slim") on harp and vocals, and a tall dude with an extravagant mustache, whose name is now lost, on drums and vocals. At that time they were undoubtedly the finest juke-box bluesband in all the land. They didn't mess around with anything too original, preferring straight-from-the-shoulder renditions of blues standards spearheaded by the fine lead work of J. They were not particularly exciting ass stage performers, but to a Boston community just beginning to explore the intellectual possibilities of the black man's blues, the J. Geils Blues Band as a definitive blues primer was an instrumental tool in shaping a musical consciousness.

At approximately the same time in Boston there was a band known as the Hallucinations. Like the J. Geils Blues Band, they were into black music far deeper than vogue superficiality. But where the Geils outfit concentrated on blues along purist lines, the Hallucinations were involving themselves with the comparatively more showy aspects of rhythm & blues (one of their very best songs was "Heatwave"). What they lacked in technical polish, they more than made up for in energetic funk. Hallucinations shows at the old Tea Party have achieved a very special place in Beantown folklore, for they combined rousingly funky music with a stage show which can only be described as contagiously outrageous.

The Hallucinations were led by guitarist Paul Shapiro and crazed vocalist Peter Wolf. Wolf, at that time also a late-night purveyor of R&B delights on local rock station WBCN, was the closest thing Boston possessed to a resident rock 'n' roll maniac. While everybody else in sight was stuck on the lethargics of acid-rock and like, Wolf just got up there and shook his ass like a madman. To many he was more than strongly reminiscent of Jagger, but he was one of the few around to exude a directly physical appeal, a precious commodity indeed in those cerebral times.

**A FEW BRIEF WORDS** should be said about the Boston rock scene in this period. While the MGM "Boston Sound" fiasco tended to concentrate on a series of opportunist readymades (under the assumption that California-styled market transplant in the East), there was a very viable scene already existant (albeit not in terms that recording industry magnates could fathom). In keeping with the relaxed life-style Boston affords, her music scene was built upon a loose comraderie of musicians, a collective of people who played and hung out together simply because it felt good.

Bands like The Remains (there's one for you to check out, Lester), The Lost (whose bassist, Walter Powers, now plays in the illegitimate Velvet Underground), The Barbarians (who, sans Moulty, moved west and became Black Pearl) and the Ramrods refused to trade in their brand of good-time, get-down music for more commercially viable academic castration. They played for their audiences, not exclusively for themselves, in a hard-and-fast manner suited even to dancing. (Let it be remembered that California hated the Beacon Street Union because they played hard rock!) They built their reputations, whether in friendly ballrooms like the Tea Party or distant lounges like the Saxony, on their ability to show the people a good time. The J. Geils Band evolved out of a scene based on these principles; principles they have thankfully never stopped operating under.

At this point in time we now have the J. Geils Blues Band and the Hallucinations both gigging on the New England rock circuit, drawing generally good response wherever they played and not pushing especially hard for instant international fame and fortune. Both groups were approached by little men with pushy cigars during the "Boston Sound" thing, but both very wisely let it pass. The entire set-up just didn't feel right, and neither was going to jump before they felt secure with themselves. While both bands had very attractive musical facets which could have made them a potentially viable product, both also possessed certain unresolved weaknesses and a great capacity for growth which only time could iron out. Yet the strengths of the J. Geils Blues Band and the Hallucinations seemed to compliment each other, and a fusion of the two bands seemed like sure-fire dynamite. Which happens to be the way things worked out.

J. and Dick happened to be hanging out at the Club 47 in Cambridge (perhaps the finest folk club this country has finest folk club this country has ever seen; it was forced to close in 1968 due to operating costs and performer's fees a small club just couldn't handle, but in its illustrious history it nursed Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Tom Rush, Jim Kweskin, Tim Hardin, David Blue and innumerable other folk luminaries through the breast-feeding stage in their development) on a night when the Hallucinations were performing. Having had problems with drummers and vocalists, it took them little time to pick up on the obvious talents of Wolf and drummer Stephen Bladd. The Hallucinations were in the process of calling it quits, and Wolf and Stephen soon found themselves in the company of J., Dick and Danny in the revitalized J. Geils Band.

ROBERT MATHEU

Under the new alignment, things began falling into place. The technical mastery of the old Geils outfit was treated to the dynamic spark so sorely missing in their formula, while Wolf found in his new comrades a necessary musical solidarity (which, in turn, disciplined him) on which to base his funky antics. Seth Justman was lured away from school by our band of renegades to do the keyboard honors, rounding out the sound perfectly. What emerged was a rambunctious amalgam of blues heritage, rhythm & blues inspiration and good old rock 'n' roll zippity-doo-dah.

Now it might have been perfectly natural to assume (and many people, myself included, did) that the J. Geils Band would burst forth from Boston to wreak vengence upon all those anemic sissies who were dominating the musical spotlight in early 1969. Such was not the case. They did manage to gather a contract from Atlantic Records, but various attempts at recording fell short of the expected mark; things didn't mesh, it still didn't feel impossible to over-praise the band: they steadfastly refused to put a product out on the market until they were completely satisfied with its representative value. Still, as the band's gigs began cutting deeper and deeper into core audience response, people began getting more and more impatient for a record. Boston rock station WBCN had the infamous J. Geils "bathroom tapes" (that were almost exactly what the name implies) and a tape of their performance at Alternate Media Conference at Goddard College, but these hardly sufficed. In the waning weeks of 1970, however, peoples' patience was rewarded—the long-awaited album from the J. Geils Band was finally delivered, and the results more than justified the extended waiting period.

I have to admit that the album, titled simply The J. Geils Band (Atlantic SD-8275), surpassed even my considerably high expectations. The entire album, I'm told, was cut in a mere three days, with little or no overdubbing or special effects. It manages to capture the good get-down vibes of their live performances (it was cut live in the studio, the only way a band like this could go), but under the expert hands of veteran R&B producers Dave Crawford and Brad Shapiro, the recording is crystal clear. And the band, as Ronnie Hawkins might say, is tighter than a twelve-year-old virgin.

One look at the cover and you know what's happening with these dudes: faces staring out in black-and-white indifference, all leathers, shades and self-confidence. If it wasn't for the facial hair you'd swear that you had stumbled into the bar that served as hang-out for the rival gang form the other side of the tracks way back in the Fifties. The music they play is just what you'd imagine at this point—tough, uncompromising funk virtually unaffected by the love generation and false narcotic gods. They should do the sound track for the movie that Sha-Na-Na only hints at.

Perhaps the most impressive thing about this album is the smooth diversity the band displays. In their early stages, the J. Geils Band, for all their technical competence, were mired somewhat in a largely derivative stance. This record attests to the fact that those days are in the past, and has much to say about individual identities as it does about a collective approach. It could be called blues, it could be called R&B, it could be called rock 'n' roll; I prefer to call it good energetic music and leave it at that. They spent their formative years absorbing the best of all these musics and the sound they have distilled is truly their own . . .

. . . "Homework" and Smokey's "First I Look At The Purse" (the two sides of their single) show what they can do with cooking R&B. Both move on a solid Geils/Magic Dick rhythm track, perfect for dancing and nearly impossible to resist. But "What's Your Hurry," penned by Wolf and Justman, shows that they are fully capable of creating their own R&B tradition. Indeed, the album is marked by both vigorous treatment of older material and an impressive ability to come up with equally fine material of their own.

Albert Collins' "Sno-Cone' and Geils' "Ice Breaker" are examples of the band's instrumental prowess. The latter must rate (especially in light of the Cream-inspired trend toward endless monotony) as a brilliant instrumental; it is compact (3:24) yet individually illuminating, and features one of the most intelligent and interesting drum solos to come down the pike since Ginger Baker made the drums an instrument of dull destruction. Their natural affection for bluesy-up-tempo ("Cruisin' For A Love," "Hard Drivin' Man") is offset by a rendition of John Lee Hooker's "Serve You Right To Suffer" that moves well despite its comparative length (5:01) and a great Wolf-Justman thing called "On Borrowed Time" in the ballad vein.

For my money, though, "Wait" is probably the album's best cut. The opening piano riff is fused with some marvelous Geils rhythmical funk, while the rest of the band supports in tightfully moving fashion. It features Wolf at the height of his vocal streetcorner cool, and "The bartender says you're disengaged" must surely be instant

# CREEM

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classic in the poetics of rock. It's the kind of song, with its infectious melody and tough vocal, that encourages bedroom rock star sing-along fantasies when nobody is around.

Though this album displays as high-energy a conception as you'll find, their years of practice and application have ingrained a polish and sense of taste that so many of your bust-'em-up bands have never stopped to consider. Their energy is smoothly directed; the kind of energy that loosens you up rather than knocking you down. Their very obvious technical skills are backed up (and sometimes even overshadowed) by an enthusiasm and emotional awareness that adds up to super-fine music and a good time guaranteed for all. But as good as the album is (and I have little doubt that it will prove itself among this year's best), it is still only a representative piece of wax and tells but one side of the J. Geils Band story.

IN REFERENCE TO MIGHTY Quick's performance at the Alternative Media conference of last summer, Lester Bangs contended that "anybody who can piss off that many people must have something going for 'em". The J. Geils band also made that gig, and on the basis of their reception it becomes apparent that anybody who can motivate that many people in a positive manner must surely have considerably more going for them. It is the live performance which ultimately defines the essence of the J. Geils Band, and at the same time convincingly separates them from the mainstream trend-chasers and hangers-on.

The J. Geils band in concert instantly recalls the aura of those wonderfully sweaty high school gyms and stiflingly crowed bar scenes that marked our collective youth. No mere re-enactment of stale nostalgia (as constituted the body of the recent "revival"), they have always operated out of the belief that certain principals from that era are not only still relevant but basic to their music. The J. Geils method must figure prominently in any discussion of music as "resensification", for while they consciously encourage open response to their music, they promote a joyous inter-action with their audience that outdistances the simple hand-clapping and murmured "far-outs" which distinguish contemporary rock reaction. Dancing and jiving, laughing and singing, on occasion even joining with the band on-stage in boisterous communion; these have long been the welcomed effects of the J. Geils experience.

Over the past years, the band's show has made strides to match that of the music. Performing has always been Peter Wolf's forte, and he serves as primary point of energy transfer between the band and audience. He used to strut about in almost Jaggeresque pose, but now comes closer to the shuffle-bomp of a drugstore Dion: an easy flow of engagingly confident energy. His raps between (and occasionally during) songs revive a lost art in rock; his humor, being both personable and personal, reflects the casual intimacy of the entire band's presentation.

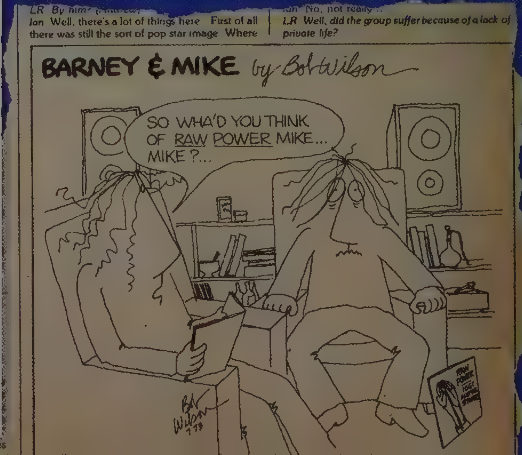
The rest of the band carry themselves with the same informal air and lack of pop-star pretension. Old J. Geils, with legs that just can't resist the rhythm, is musical maestro, and he wrenches those notes from his quitar with a fluidity that makes it look deceptively simple. Each member of the band registers an awareness of the others visually as well as musically. You know they're having fun up there, dammit, and that makes resistance high impossible. I mean, how can any self-respecting hipster be expected to maintain his ultra-cool (which he cultivated, no doubt, only after long hours in front of the mirror and endless Bogart flicks) in the face of six men so obviously enjoying themselves and, what's worse, going out of their way to provoke the audience into the same frame of enjoyment. (And, after all, aren't rock 'n' roll stars supposed to act detached, indifferent, and even downright aristocratic. This sort of thing is liable to undermine the very foundation of 1960s rock 'n' roll.)

The music is always solid. A standard J. Geils Band set will give you all your favorite tunes from the album, and considerably more to surprise and delight. They pay ample tribute to their root affections (J. is particularly fond of Otis Spann, Wolf possesses every R&B single issued since 1896), they introduce new compositions (the Wolf-Justman team, on the basis of the album alone, will no doubt keep us supplied with killer music for quite some time to come), and they throw in left-field presents just to keep you on your toes (I am told they are considering "Wooly Bully" for that special J. Geils treatment). But despite their loose physical presence, the music and show are professionally oiled for machinegun movement. That they have found an effective translation of their funky excitement into a thoroughly professional context attests to the fact that the time they took getting here was more than well spent.

The Boston Tea Party is no more. It stands orphaned and alone on Lansdowne Street these days, another permanent fixture in the nostalgia of Boston. That other Boston fixture, the J. Geils Band, is very much alive, however, and firmly a part of the present that the Tea Party just couldn't keep up with. Like Boston itself, they make a name for themselves in their own solid, though admittedly hardly neon spectacular, way. If you've got the ears, they've got the music, and that's probably as far as a J. Geils hype will ever go. And that's good. Judging from the response they appear to be getting, Boston is going to have to make concessions to ears all over the country who are picking up on her most solid musical citizens. Which, I think, is just fine. ■

the Faces

**From Out of the Cognac**
What with all the exorcisms, flying saucers and other jiggery pokeries going around, it's no surprise a Creature walks among us. This fiend without a face can be recognized by its blue spittle, ingrown talons and general alcoholic couthlessness. Here we see it being subdued by a fraternity from Muslim, Alabama. Authorities later identified the beast as Ray Milland.
—April 1974



*LR* By him? (Andrew)
*Ian* Well, there's a lot of things here First of all there was still the sort of pop star image Where

*Ian* No, not really...
*LR Well, did the group suffer because of a lack of private life?*

BARNEY & MIKE by Bob Wilson
SO WHA'D YOU THINK OF RAW POWER MIKE... MIKE ?...
Bob Wilson

FACES: CREEM PHOTO ARCHIVE; MIKE & BARNEY: BOB WILSON

# CREEM™

POLICE

**CREEM**

*"I was the subject of two Star's Cars—this one, and one with a Rolls-Royce. Being from Detroit, I would never actually own a Corniche, though I bought my wife one. I drove a '57 Chevy convertible and am a confirmed muscle car guy to this day. My garage smells like gasoline and motor oil. It's a guy thing. As for the two blonde bombshells I posed with on the August '74 cover, they're probably nuns now."*

*—Alice Cooper*

# Star's Cars

## ALICE COOPER

November 1975
Photo by Steve Reyes

In honor of Alice Cooper's successful de-fermentation, the generous gents at GM were more than happy to sell him an auto (once he produced proof that he was again insured, of course). But those smiles turned into worried frowns, and then catatonic shock when Coop's requested dream car was voiced: Yeah, I want the new model. . . the '57 Chevy Bel Air with gangster white walls and all the latest options. I had last year's model, the '56, but figure that since the Secretary Of State gave me back my license, I should go for the best, ya know? . . ." It took a lot of looking and much piecing together, but at long last the guys at Mel's New & Used A-1 Condition Car Company filled the order, leaving Alice with one hot tip for his next set of wheel: "Keep an eye out for the '59 Buick line. They're supposed to be *real* hot . . ."

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")

MICHAEL N. MARKS

## STEVE MARRIOTT

**HOME:** In the bushes of Itchykoo Park.

**AGE:** Ever the street punk.

**PROFESSION:** Army sergeant moonlighting as heavy metal Aretha Franklin.

**HOBBIES:** Various—boo, tea, reefer, gage, doobies, mojo.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *Birth Of The Blues* by Ronnie Lane.

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Passin'.

**QUOTE:** "I'm not getting shorter. I'm getting better."

**PROFILE:** Insatiable, on and off stage. Steve lives in quick cut, now the whirling dervish, now the laid-back leprechaun. A pop firecracker, ignited by the blues, with a fuse that won't run out.

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

BOY HOWDY!
Creem

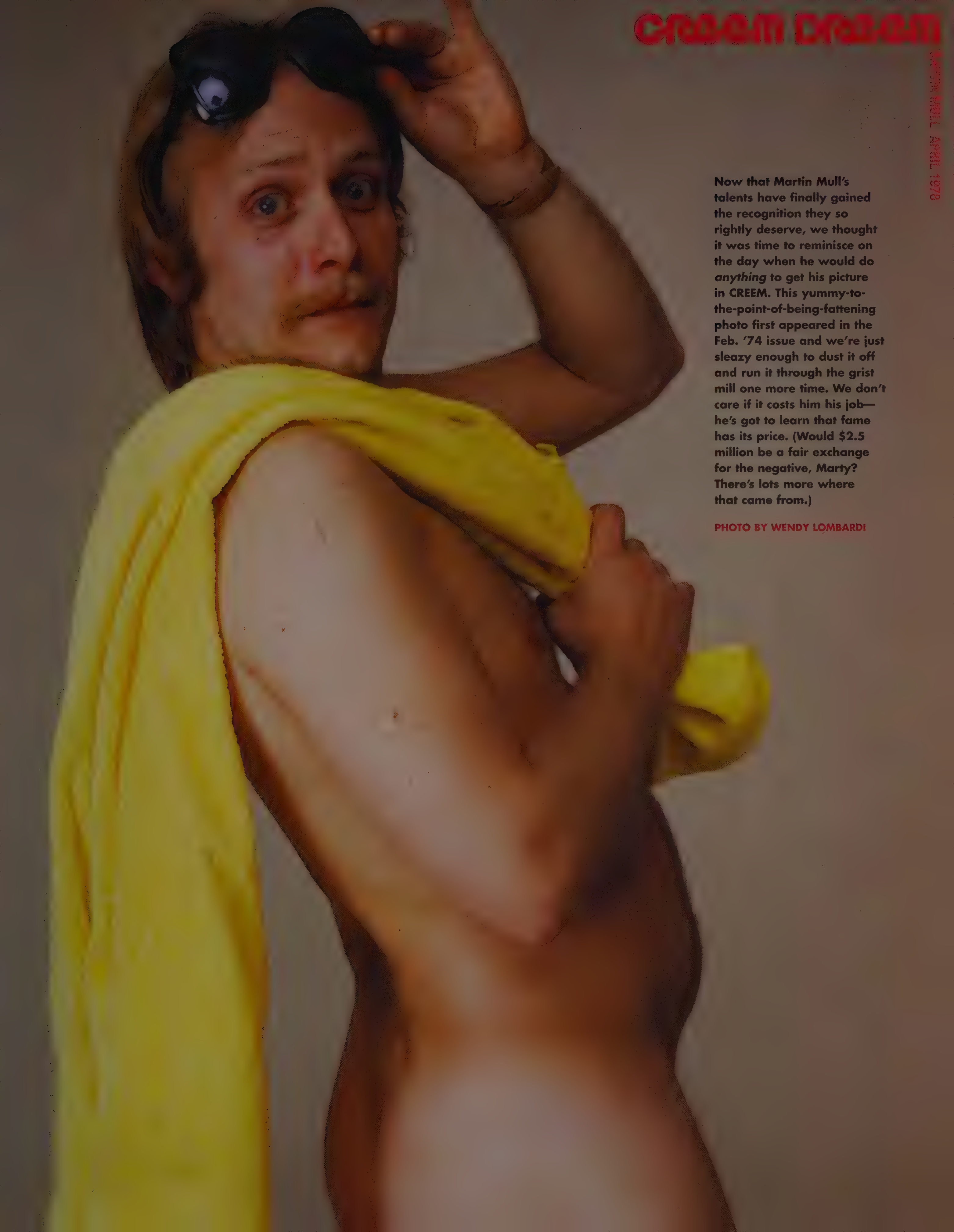
***Authentic*** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

BOY HOWDY! ™

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**

# CREEM DREEM

MARTIN MULL APRIL 1978



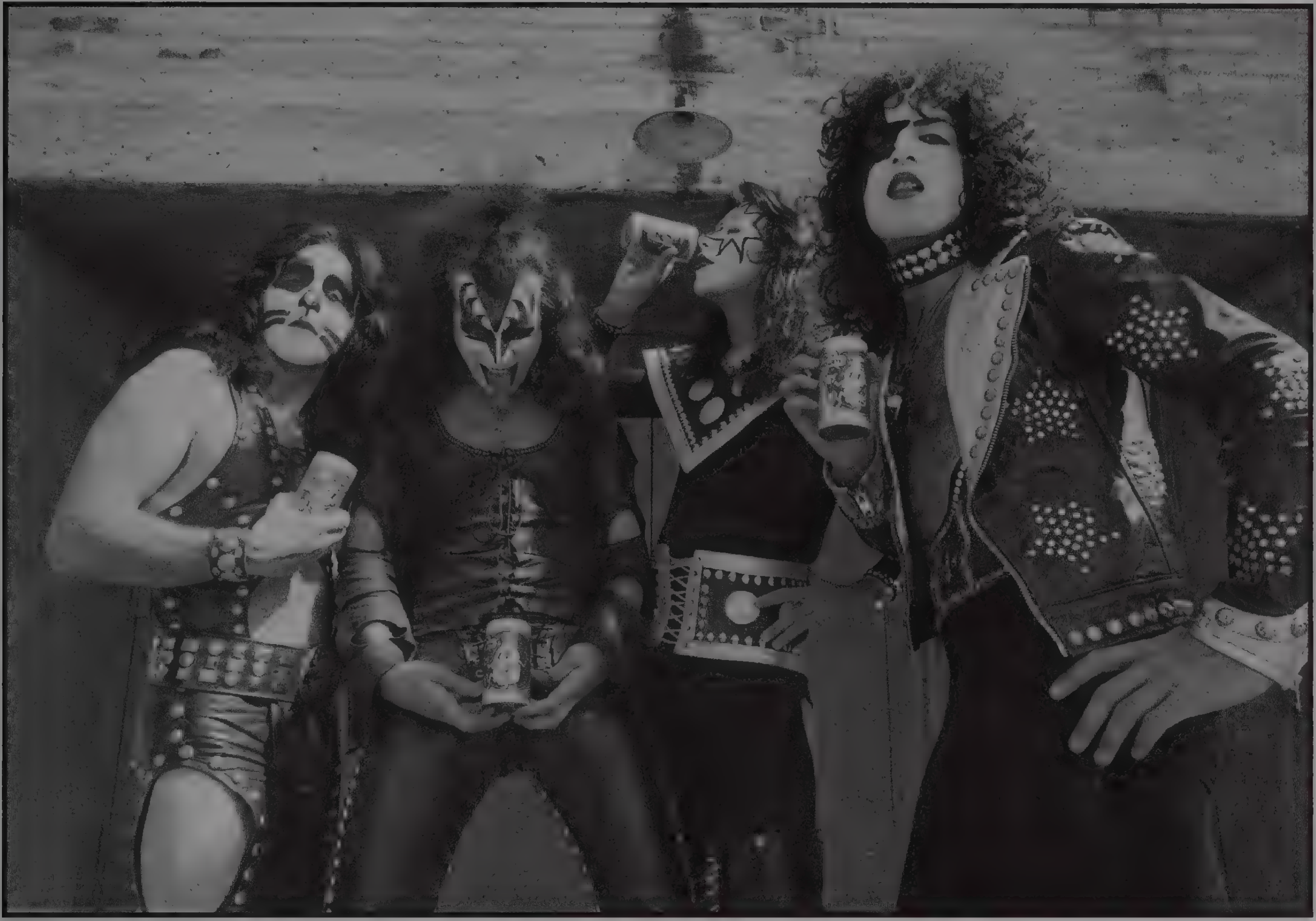
Now that Martin Mull's talents have finally gained the recognition they so rightly deserve, we thought it was time to reminisce on the day when he would do *anything* to get his picture in CREEM. This yummy-to-the-point-of-being-fattening photo first appeared in the Feb. '74 issue and we're just sleazy enough to dust it off and run it through the grist mill one more time. We don't care if it costs him his job—he's got to learn that fame has its price. (Would $2.5 million be a fair exchange for the negative, Marty? There's lots more where that came from.)

PHOTO BY WENDY LOMBARDI

CR EM

# CREEM'S PROFILES

**(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")**



CHARLIE AURINGER

## KISS

**HOME:** Last House on the left.

**AGE:** Three square to the tenth power.

**PROFESSION:** Bazooka crawlies.

**HOBBIES:** Measuring the IKG's of the nubile young.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *Conan Comes To Brooklyn.*

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** A quantum leap in the technology of footlight smokebombs.

**QUOTE:** "Are my zits all covered, Gene?"

**PROFILE:** Firm and lean, when standing next to a mirror. Risibilities unlimited, fullcourt press and chock fulla nuts. Potential for great public exploitation, ambulatory therapy and letting the good bogs roll. Coming on strong in Vegematic boots.

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

***Authentic*** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**

OUNT FIVE
PERSONAL MANAGEMENT:

# A CREEM EDITOR REMEMBERS

Sometime between August 1979—when I started working at CREEM—and this very minute, I must've shared a drink or three with Mr. Robert Matheu, in his earlier guise as a rock 'n' roll photographer, and talked a lot. I know that to be a fact.

Bob remembers me raving about a piece by Lester Bangs in CREEM some years earlier that had profoundly disturbed me. It was an earlier piece, from 1971, that not many people had read, at least not then, because at the time the magazine wasn't nationally distributed. But things have changed. The piece was titled "Psychotic Reactions And Carburetor Dung: A Tale Of These Times," and that name of course would later be given to a well-known anthology of Lester's writings.

But Bob remembers that the piece had really spooked me, and here's why. If you've read the piece—and by now, I'll presume you have—you'll recall it's Lester's alternate universe account of the Count Five. It's the untold story wherein the creators of "Psychotic Reaction" were not one-hit wonders, but prolific album artists who followed up their debut LP with a series of discs entitled, sequentially, *Carburetor Dung*, *Cartesian Jetstream*, *Ancient Lace And Wrought-Iron Railings*, and tragic career-ender *Snowflakes Falling On The International Date Line.*

I'm very certain I must have shared with Bob precisely what I felt upon reading Lester's Count Five piece at the time, and I'll share it now with you as well. It was, simply, this: *How the hell could I have* missed *these?*

Yes, the sad truth was that I had spent a horrifying amount of my personal time in the late '60s thumbing through the racks of virtually every record store in my hometown of Miami, accumulating great stuff, crap, forgettable albums, crap, and albums that only cost 29 cents but I bought because they'd had a psychedelic cover. I know record labels, I knew serial numbers, I knew that if in fact Count Five's final album had a Columbia Masterworks "MS" prefix, as Lester had written, it made *sense* that George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra would've appeared on it.

More importantly, I knew that nobody in his right mind would ever *lie* about this stuff.

So, I am now sheepish to admit, it took me about two additional years—two *valuable* additional years of my life, I should add—pawing through Michigan record stores, second-hand shops and Salvation Army shelves to finally, completely, thoroughly and with no lingering doubt whatsoever, decide: Hey, he *was* lying!

Significantly, it was also at that precise moment I realized that getting paid to be a professional liar was one *hell* of a plush gig, so I set my sights to work at CREEM.

I think I told Bob this story the night that Mamie Eisenhower was pole-dancing at the strip club he and I ran on Woodward Avenue after the stock market crash in 1980, but heck, I might be wrong about that, too. All I know is, back when Madonna was guzzling champagne and feeding me bon-bons, I'd say just about anything and barely remember it the next day. Bob was there—he should *know* that, don't you think?

—Dave DiMartino

# psychotic reactions & carburetor dung

*a tale of these times*

BY LESTER BANGS
JUNE 1971

**Run here, my towhead grandchillen, and let this geezer dandle you upon his knee. *While you still recognize me, you litte maniacs.* You know the gong has tolled, it's that time again. Now, let me set my old brain a-ruminatin', ah, what upbuilding tale from days of yore shall I relate today?**

**"What's all this shit about The Yardbirds?"**

Ah, The Yardbirds. Yes indeedie, those were the days. 1965, and I were an impetuous young squirt, just fell in puppy love first time, she used to push my hand away and sniff "I'd like to but I don't wanna turn into a tramp." The girls were actually like that in those . . .

. . .But The Yardbirds, you know, even though they turned it all around they only lasted a coupla years. And some of the imitators they had! Man, I used to get my yuks just *lookin'* at those records! Like when they did "I'm A Man" and made the Top Ten with a mixture of Bo Diddley (ahh, he was this old fat cat cooked up this sorta famous shuffle beat . . . I think it was already passé before you guys were even born. . .

. . .That was also when I got back into those junior jiver Yardbirds imitations in a big way. Like their wax "Back Door Man" by the Shadows of Knight, who were really good at copping The Yardbird riffs and reworking 'em, and *Psychotic Reaction* (Double Shot DSM 1001) by Count Five, who weren't so hot at it actually but ripped their whole routine off with such grungy spunk that I really dug 'em the most! They were a bunch of really young guitar-slappin' brats from some indistinguishable Los Angeles suburb, and just a few months after "I'm A Man" left the charts they got right in there with this really inept imitation called "Psychotic Reaction." And it was a big hit, in fact I think it was an even bigger hit than "I'm A Man," which burned me up at the time but was actually cool now that I think about it, yeah, perfectly appropriate. The song was a real schlockhouse grinder, completely fatuous. It started out with this fuzz guitar riff they stole off a Johnny Rivers hit that escapes me just now—it was the one just before "Secret Agent Man"—then went into one of the stupidest vocals of all time. It went, let me see, some jive like: "I feel depressed, I feel so bad/Cause you're the best girl that I've ever had/I can't get yer love, I can't get affection/Aouw, little girl's psychotic reaction. . . *An' it feels like this!,"* and then they'd shoot off into an exact "I'm A Man" ripoff. It was absolute dynamite. I hated it at first but then one day I was driving down the road stoned and it came on and I clapped my noggin: "What the fuck am I thinking of? That's a great song!"

I never could get up the nerve to buy the album (Double Shot DSM-1001) though. It had a killer cover, too—the photo was taken from the bottom of a grave, around the rim of which stood the members of the group, staring down atcha in the sepulcher with bugeyed malice. Really eerie, except that they were all wearing like madras shirts and checkered slacks from Penney's. Which was not so eerie, but a nice touch in the long run. The colors and lettering were nice, too.

I *tried* and tried to buy the *Psychotic Reaction* LP—I'd go down to the Unimart stoned on grass, on nutmeg, vodka, Romilar or coming glassy-eyed off ten Dexedrine hours spent working problems in Geometry (I was a real little scholar—when I had the magic medicine which catapults you into a maniacal, obsessive craving for knowledge), I tried every gambit to weaken my resistance, but nothing worked. Shit, I had a fuckin' split personality! And all over a fuckin' *Count Five album!* Maybe I was closer to the jokers' jailhouse than I ever imagined! On the other hand, what else could I or any other loon from my peer group ever possibly become schizoid over, *but* a lousy rock 'n' roll album? Girls? Nahh, that's direct, simple, unrationalized. Drugs? Sure, but it'd be them on *me*, "Yer gonna *pay* for messin' with us, boy!," not my own inner wrack of dualistic agony. Nope, nothing more nor less than a *record*, a rock 'n' roll album of the approximate significance of *Psychotic Reaction* (who could contract barking fits from a Stones platter, much less the Beatles?), could ever pulverize my lobes and turn my floor to wormwood . . .

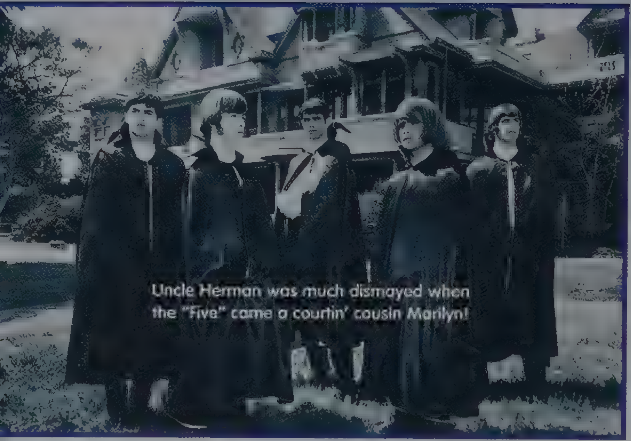
. . . So I finally got the courage of my lunacy and bought Count Five. I guess the last straw was when I read in a Teen Fan magazine (the only recourse then for some hardy listener trying to figure out what's going on with each new sluice of product) that Count Five claimed to have turned down "a million dollars in bookings" because it would have meant that they would have to drop out of college and, said their manager, all the boys realized that getting a good education was the most important thing they could do. What a howl! That really appealed to my sense of absurdity, so the next time I perused the album in the racks I snorted, "The boys who went back to school . . ." That's a certain claim to distinction—imagine Mick Jagger suddenly tripped by an attack of remorse now, and right in the middle of a glug of champage at some jet-set hot-spot the ineluctable truth hits him: *You' ve got to get an education boy.* You may have millions, but do you think you'll be a popstar all your life? Decidedly not. *What* will you do in those long years of dark autumn? Do you want to end up like Turner, having someone come up and blow your brains out because you can't think of any other diversions at the moment? It's not too late! Get back to the London School of Economics and get that degree. Man must have some form of constructive work to do; otherwise he's an ignoble weasel without meaning.

So he gulps the rest of the champagne, disengages himself from the sweet thing at his side, and runs off to register. Eventually he earns a degree in Art and when the Stones fold he settles down to teach the drawing of the straight line to a succession of eager moppets. What an example that would be! He might even get blessed live and in person by the Pope, or invited to the White House! But of course that will never happen, because Mick Jagger is made of baser clay than Count Five.

I bought the album. It was the same day I got *Happy Jack* by the Who. I rushed home, found in *Happy Jack* a mild satisfaction, gagged at *Psychotic Reaction*.

But *Psychotic Reaction* was the album I kept coming back to. I played it gleefully and often for a year or so until it was ripped off by some bikers, and when I finally found it once more in 1971 in a used record store, man, I up and danced a jig. Then, however, I did something oddly petty and avaricious. . .

. . . Track for track, you couldn't have found a better deal in a whole year's releases from Warner/Reprise. "Double Decker Bus" and "Peace of



Uncle Herman was much dismayed when the "Five" came a courtin' cousin Marilyn!

Mind" mashed the Yardbirds into masterpieces as vital as the title hit, the latter for one of the most perfect examples of the rigidly mechanical riff in history, the former for its truly cosmic lyrics ("Well just you walk/Down any street/If you don't see one of us/You're sure to see/A double-decker bus!")

But the real classics on the first Count Five album that, while ignored in their own time, might have proven vastly influential if mere people had been able to comprehend what the band was doing. "Pretty Big Mouth" was a crunching Tex-Mex street jam, somewhat reminiscent of a Caucasian crew of Red Mountain mariachis, which anticipated the even earthier excursions of their second album and scored with some of the greatest male chauvinist lyrics of all time: "I ended up in the deep deep South/Makin' love to the woman with a real big mouth!"

"They're Gonna Get You," somewhat similarly, was a sprung-rhythm essay in barbershop paranoia, particularly shining by a vocal which veered deliriously between a sullen plaint anticipating Iggy and a cartoon falsetto. But the real mind-crusher was "The World," a crazy clatter whose very monotony buckles under your feet like one of those moving ramps in the crazy house at an amusement park, while the lyrics consisted of a Spartan minimum of phrases—"I'll tell the world, you're my girl, you're so fine, you are mine"—crowed in a series of whoops and gnashings google-eyed with glee and lunatic pride.

Unfortunately, *Psychotic Reaction* was the only Count Five album to be widely disseminated and recognized in its own time. Double Shot, a company nearly as erratic in promoting West Coast talent as ESP-Disk's handling of New York innovators like the Godz, all but buried their second and third releases, giving them promotion and distribution equaled in its myopia and indifference only by Decca's handling of the early Who. The band was lucky enough, however, to have a dynamite manager with the vision to comprehend their potentials and enough hardnosed hucksterish drive to eventually land them a contract with Columbia records, where they made two more fine albums which, though given the production and promotion they had always merited, still fell flat sales-wise. Ignorant people were still writing them off as nothing more than a Yardbirds rip-off, critics ignored or smeared them with their snidest categorizations, and the sad result was that their most important work has never been given the attention it truly deserves.

Ironically enough, even as the "underground" press and self-appointed arbiters of public taste maintained their conspiracy of silence, it was the very despised trade journals of the "establishment" which first recognized Count Five's achievement in its initial flowering: "Evolving like so many others from their crude beginnings, Count Five has at length distinguished itself as a subtle, sophisticated integration of solid musical workmen creating some of the freshest and least grating sounds in recent memory." That's *Billboard*, talking about Count Five's fourth album, *Ancient Lace* and *Wrought-Iron Railings* (Columbia CS-9733).

But when *Snowflakes Falling On The International Dateline* (Columbia MS-7528) came out, it blew everybody with *ears*, all the kids fresh and free enough to flip the opinion-mafia the bird, right out the door and all the way to the corner. It featured the unparalleled "Schizophrenic Rainbows: A Raga Concerto," which no one who's sat through its entire 27 minutes will ever be able to forget, especially the thunderous impact of the abrupt and full-volumed entry of George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra in the 18th minute. On this basis alone it must be considered the masterpiece among their albums, though the melancholy "Sidewalks of Calais" which closed Side One was also superb, with its remarkable lyrical maturation: "Pitting patting, trying not to step on the cracks/In Europa, where we saw no sharecropper shacks/Reciting our Mallarme/ Those films with Tom Courtenay/And your hand in mine/On the sidewalks of Calais/Oh no, I shan't forget. . ."

Unfortunately, that was their last release. After investing so much technology and money in such an ambitious project and being repaid with such total public indifference, both the band and Columbia grew despondent at last, their contract lapsed, and the musicians themselves split for parts unknown, though one, the incredible guitar stylist John "Mouse" Michalski, later emigrated to England and formed the legendary though short-lived Stone Prodigies with several ex-members of John Mayall's Blues Breakers and Ginger Baker's Airforce. That cluth of titans, as everybody remembers, made one incredible album, *To John Coltrane In Heaven*, then embarked on their record-breaking ten-month tour of the States which was so grueling that afterwards the entire band were committed to rest homes for the rest of their lives.

Between *Psychotic Reaction* and the *Snowflakes* swan song, Count Five produced three other albums, each equally great and each a seven-league step ahead of the last. My favorite has always been their third, *Cartesian Jetstream* (Double Shot DSS 1023). Here we had the fullest development of Count Five as a band that was intrinsically and still unqualifiedly rock 'n' roll (one need only give ear to the old Anglo-Saxon madrigals and Felicianoan pseudo-Flamenco of *Ancient Lace & Wrought Iron Railings* to realize where their true strength lay). Fine and professional, yet intensely driving and *almost* grungy (sophistication, like history, cannot be braked), it was truly exhilarating music, filled with the wild pulsebeat of life itself. Such dynamic originals as "Cannonballs For Christmas," "Her Name Is Ianthe," and "Nothing Is True/Everything Is Permitted" bring me back to it again and again, as does the addition of Marion Brown, alto sax, Sun Ra, piano, and Roland Kirk, bass pennywhistle, on the last track, "Free All Political Prisoners! Seize the Time! Keep the Faith! Sock It To 'Em! Shut the Motherfucker Down! Then Burn It Up! Then Give The Ashes To The Indians! All Power To The People! Right On! All Power To Woodstock Nation! And Watch For Falling Rocks!" That one was a true brain-blitz, and spotlighted some of the most original lyrics of the year.

The only Count Five album to fall totally flat was their second, *Carburetor Dung* (Double Shot DSS 1009). It can truly be said that this was Count Five at their grungiest. In fact, it was so grungy, that on most of the songs you could barely distinguish anything except an undifferentiated wall of grinding noise and intermittent punctuation of glottal sowlike gruntings. I suppose the best way to characterize the album would be to call it murky. Some of the lyrics were intelligible, such as these, from "The Hermit's Prayer": "Sunk funk dunk Dog God the goosie Gladstone prod old maids de back seat sprung Louisiana sundown junk an' bunk an' sunken treasures/But oh muh drunken hog-bogs/I theenk I smell a skunk." Lyrics such as those don't come every day, and even if their instrumental backup sounded vaguely like a car stuck in the mud and spinning its wheels, it cannot be denied that the song had a certain value as a prototype slab of gulley-bottom rock 'n' roll. Other songs, such as "Sweat Haunch Woman," "Woody Dicot," and "Creole Jukebox Pocahontas" validated themselves by emerging slightly from the uniform one-dimensional sloppiness of the rest of the material.

On the other hand, you might be better off not to take my word, but just go into my record library and check the album out for yourself. ■

CREEM PHOTO ARCHIVE

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")

CHARLIE AURINGER

# ROXY MUSIC

**HOME:** The ballrooms of Mars

**AGE:** Younger than tomorrow, as old as Dirk Bogarde movies

**PROFESSION:** Sarcastic raconteurs from the velveteen alleys of rock rococo. Whizzmeisters of sound textures and the spaces between.

**HOBBIES:** Cruising the social register.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *Who Killed Society* by Cleveland Amory.

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Performing rock 'n' roll in a tuxedo not made of denim.

**QUOTE:** "Eno is a fruit."

**PROFILE:** At once lush and laserlike, Roxy has the poise and propulsion to make them the solidest band of the '70s. So elegant in concert that the audience responding to them is polite. Such a relief from trash and glitterwimps.

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

BOY HOWDY!
Creem

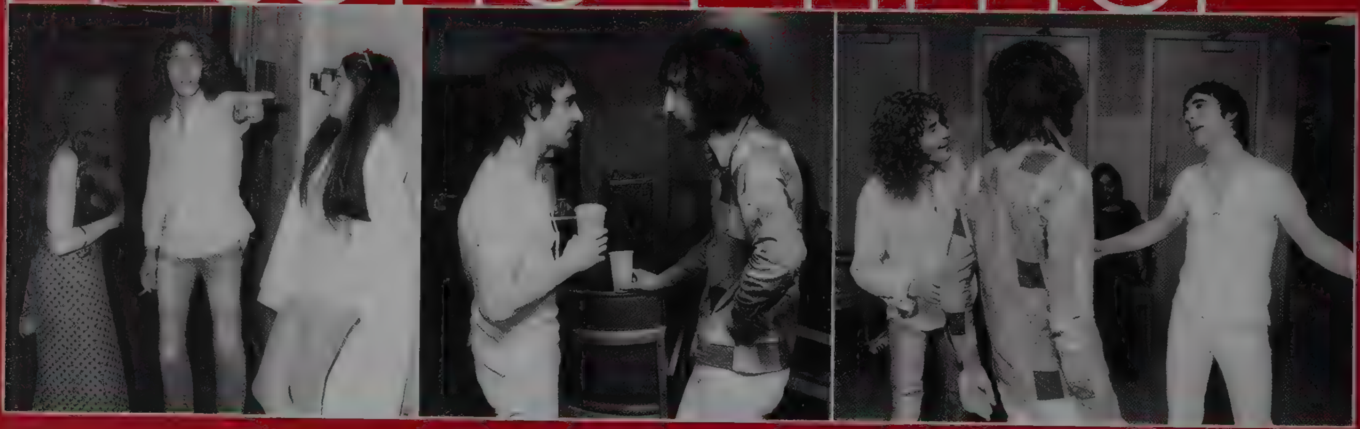
***Authentic*** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

BOY HOWDY! ™

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**

BY DAVEY MARSH • DECEMBER 1971 • PHOTOS BY CHARLEY AURINGER

# A Who Primer



**HIPPITY** hop and flippity flop we're off to see The Who. Who? The Who, that's who. (Peter Townshend plays guitar just like that too . . . WHOOOO? WHOOOOO. WHOOO WHOOOOO WHOOOOOOOOM.)

**SEE** the funny girls backstage. "No tickee no watchee," sez the backdoor man. (The men don't know but the little girls unnerstan'.)

**MYLON** is on stage. Mylon tries very hard. He is stoned. He says so. I am bored. I say so. We walk around.

**GUZZLE** toke, here is a Who fan. See him laugh. See him take a pill. It is red. See the wine bottle. See him drink. Slurp, guzzle. See the joint. Toke, Who fan, toke.

**SOME** of the guzzle-tokers don't have tickets. They are very mad. That is reasonable. Except there isn't any room inside. Crash, bam, boom! See the plate glass window come down. See the rock writer get scared. *He* has heard about what happened at Forest Hills: a guzzle-toker died there. The writer calms down after the guzzle-tokers are repulsed. He is left feeling am-bi-va-lent. That means confused.

**SEE** Keith Moon. See *him* guzzle. We do not see The Who toke. But we do see them guzzle. A lot. Guzzle, Keith, guzzle. Guzzle, guzzle, guzzle.

**SEE** the pretty girls. See them hide behind Maybelline, Max Factor, Prince Matchabelli and Revlon. These are not rock stars, they are cosmetic companies. The rock stars are hiding behind Budweiser, Johnny Walker and Gilbey's.

**EXCEPT** for Peter Townshend. He is standing behind a button of a funny man with a beard and a grin. The bearded grinner's name is Meher Baba. Peter Townshend has a beard too. He does not have a grin, at least not tonight. That is understandable.

*Davey Marsh, with his usual humility, maintains that this piece is not only still pertinent, but moreover, "It was a masterpiece then, and it's a masterpiece now."*

—Best of CREEM, *Spring 1978*

**HEAR** The Who start to play. See Peter jump. Jump, Peter, jump. See Keith drum. Twirl, Keith, twirl. Hear Roger sing. Dance, Roger, dance. Who is that funny guy in the corner? Oh, that's John Entwistle. He always acts like that.

**SEE** the rock writer. He has been worried all day. He is not sure The Who are so great anymore. Lots of ordinary people like them now. He smiles when they go into "Baby Don't Do It." Smile, rock writer, smile. They are THE BEST FUCKIN' BAND HE'S EVER SEEN.

**NOW** see the audience. They are worried too. The Who have played for almost an hour. But they haven't done *Tommy*. Play Who, play. Cheer, Who fans, cheer. Call for "See Me Feel Me," guzzle-tokers. Call, call. The Who just keep playing. Great, Who, great.

**SEE** Peter Townshend. See him talk to the crowd. Meher Baba did not speak for forty years. Peter Townshend loves Meher Baba. But not that much.

**SEE** Roger Daltrey. See him scream. Scream, Roger, scream. You are better at it than Joe Cocker.

**SEE** John Entwistle. If you can.

**SEE** Keith Moon. He is guzzling, even on stage. Keith owns a pub in Britain. We understand Keith. It is cheaper that way.

**SEE** The Who smash. Smash, Peter, smash. Break, Keith, break. Stand, John, stand. Listen to the funny noises. They are piercing noises. Feel your ear drums implode, audience. Pain, pain, pain.

**SEE** The Who take a curtain call. Bow, boys, bow. You did it again. The audience is happy. But they still wish you'd done *Tommy*. Oh well. ■

# CREEM PRESENTS ALICE COOPER'S ALCOHOL COOKBOOK

Photos by Bob Gruen

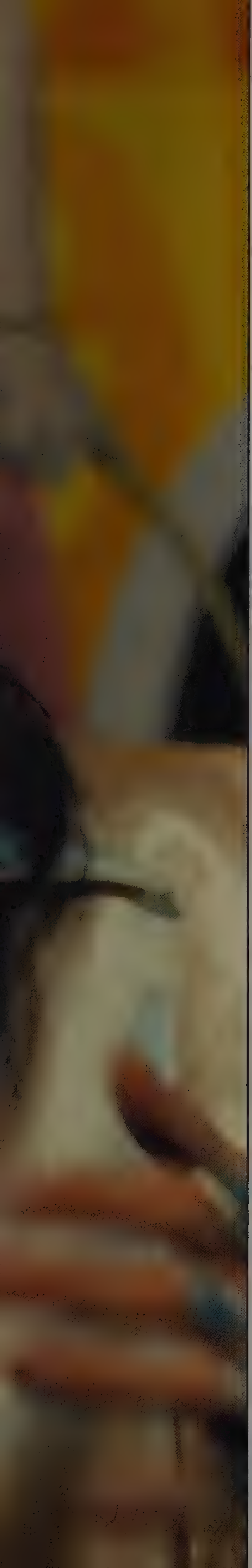
*Nobody told me at the time that all the alcohol cooks out! I loved the idea of eating and getting drunk at the same time. I was so drunk I barely remember the cookbook, so the recipes obviously worked. But then again there are four or five albums of mine I don't even remember recording.*

*That same issue I was named "Punk of the Year" in the first CREEM Reader's Poll. I would never assume to threaten the crown of the true king of the punks—Iggy—but I don't think there was any other category into which I fit.*

*—Alice Cooper*

June 1973

Thank god the age of drug sickies is over. Those bread 'n' butter boys, Alice Cooper, have provided exemplary leadership into the genial asskicking renaissance of alkiedom. They stand for booze almost as much as great music, and though they may total Porsches, puke up pop tabs and bite off their fans' thumbs, none of 'em will ever make the cover of *Rolling Stone* by ODing in a Continental opium den. All-American lushes to a man, they want you should follow their good example. So PUT DOWN those needles and Quaaludes, kiddo, and pick up the jug! It's the surest fastest way to glean all the chrome hotcha charisma of Alice himself for your very own; just stumble around drunk on your ass all the time and instant stardom is assured. Stan Cornyn will break down your door with a recording contract and all the boys and girls on your block will want to ball you. You can start with (unpaid plug) Budweiser beer, which is the Cooper crew's staple suds, consumed by the gallon day in and day out. For those intrepid souls and old alkies with a tolerance who want to machete their way into the exotic recesses of classic Alice Cooper toxicity, the band has provided us with the following truly lethal recipes, each and every one employing spiritus fermenti in a diabolic manner unique to Alice's taste and lifestyle on the road and at home.



## ALICE COOPER

**PINA COLADA A LA COOPER** for six
10 ounces dark (151 proof) rum
1/6 fresh pineapple, chipped into sections
16 ounces fresh coconut milk

*Pour the rum into a bowl. Soak the pineapple into the rum. Pour into blender, adding two more ounces rum. Add coconut milk, then two ounces fresh pineapple juice and one tray ice. Blend until you freeze it. Garnish with pineapple wedge and cherry.*

**VELVET HAMMER**
1 ounce gin
1 ounce apricot brandy
1 ounce dry vermouth
1 dash Maraschino liqueur
1 dash orange bitters

*Stir with ice. Strain into standard cocktail glass.*

**ROYAL SETUP** for preconcert
2 ounces Crown Royal
8 ounces coke
1 ice cube

*Drink until you feel prepared to face 20,000 screaming teenage maniacs.*

**LIZARD SKIN**

*Hollow out half a large orange. Pour in one large jigger of brandy, flame brandy, extinguish after a moment. Drink.*

**TUNAFISH MALTED** for hangovers
1 can tunafish
2 scoops pistachio ice cream
4 ounces cream

*Blend. Drink. Go Back to Bed.*

## MICHAEL BRUCE

**NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD**
2/3 jigger 90 proof rum
1 1/3 jiggers 86 proof Gold Seal rum
2/3 jigger 86 proof White Label rum
2/3 jigger pineapple juice
2/3 jigger papaya juice
juice of 1 lime
1 teaspoon powdered sugar

*Shake well with ice and pour into a tall glass. Decorate with pineapple and cherry and float on top Demerara Rum, 151 proof. Sprinkle with powdered sugar and attack.*

**H-BOMB**
1/4 ounce yellow chartreuse
1/4 ounce green chartreuse
1/4 ounce brandy
1/4 ounce bourbon whiskey

*Shake well with ice and strain into glass. Beware of alcoholic fallout.*

**MAI TAI MASSACRE**
1 ounce light Puerto Rico rum
1 ounce light Jamaica rum
1/2 ounce orange curacao
1/4 ounce Orgeat syrup
dash of juice of whole lime

*Mix and pour. Leave no trace of the struggle.*

**ALICE COOPER ASS-KICK**

*Squeeze 1/2 lime into a 12 ounce glass and drop in the rind. Add ice cubes and 1 1/2 jiggers vodka, and fill with ginger beer. Stir and serve.*

**CERTIFIED GOLD**

*Combine in tumbler the juice of 1/2 lemon, 1 jigger raspberry syrup and 1 jigger brandy. Fill with chilled champagne and celebrate.*

## DENNIS DUNAWAY

**DUNAWAY'S DEVIL**
2/3 jigger brandy
1/3 jigger green Crème de Menthe
1 pinch red pepper

*Shake brandy and crème de menthe. Strain into glass. Sprinkle red pepper on top.*

**KISS OF DEATH**
1/3 rye whiskey
1/3 dry vermouth
1/6 Dubonnet
1/6 orange juice
1 slice orange

*Stir well with ice and strain into glass.*

**GOLD CADILLAC**
3/4 ounce white Crème de Cacao
1 ounce 100 proof vodka
3/4 ounce Cointreau
2 ounces fresh orange juice
3/4 ounce Galliano
3 or 4 ounces ice cream
handful of ice

*Blend until smooth.*

**ALEXANDER THE GREAT**
1 ounce brandy
1 ounce dark Crème de Cacao
2 or 3 ounces cream.

*Blend it. Serve with powdered nutmeg on top.*

## NEAL SMITH

**GREENWICH MANSION DIP**
1/2 apple brandy
1/2 white crème de menthe
3 dashes Pernod

*Shake well with ice, and strain into glass.*

**BILLION DOLLAR BABY**
1 1/2 ounces whiskey
1/2 ounce curacao
1 dash grenadine
1 white of egg

*Shake with ice as though all five Coopers had turned all the way up and were playing right between your ears. Strain into cocktail glass.*

**CRÈME DE BANANA**
1 chilled shot glass.

*Drink by the shot until you get there.*

**EVIL EYE**
2/3 Pernod
1/3 peppermint

*Shake well with ice and strain into glass.*

**STINGING WHIP**
1/2 brandy
1/4 sweet vermouth
1/4 dry vermouth
3 dashes curacao
1 dash Pernod

*Mix and sip.*

## GLEN BUXTON*

*(*Because of the severity of Glen's pancreas problems, he's been ordered by doctors never to drink again. He'll still go you shot-for-shot, but with gingerale please. What we're presenting here are Glen's favorites from his days of wine and Budweiser. –Ed.)*

**BUXTON'S BOMBER**
1 jigger cognac
1/3 jigger Cointreau
1/3 jigger anisette
2/3 jigger vodka

*Shake well with ice and strain into large glass. Drink. Repeat indefinitely.*

**BLACK PLAGUE**
1 wineglass rum
1 tablespoon molasses

*Stir vigorously in glass. Fill with hot water. Stir and serve with nutmeg on top.*

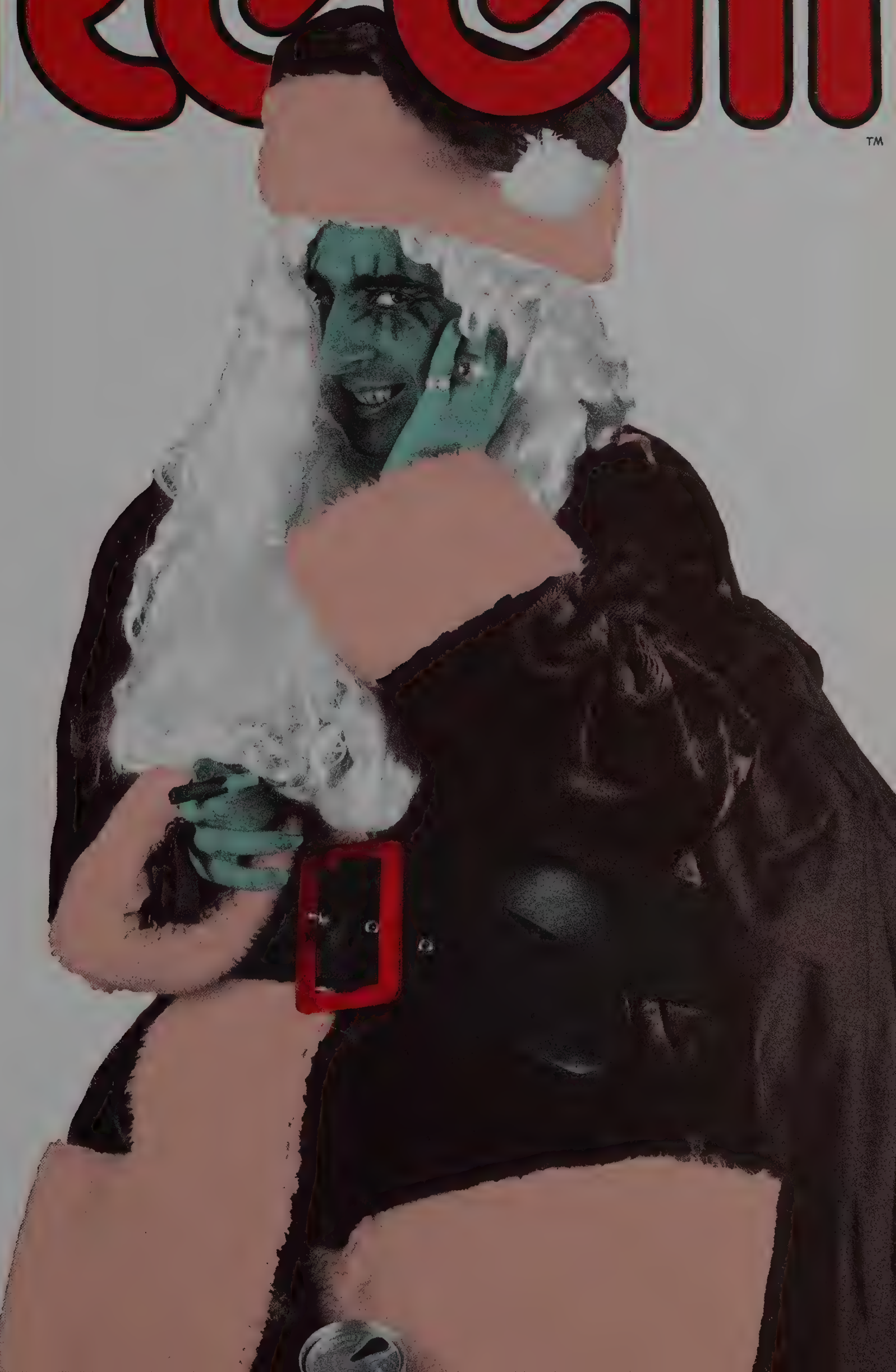
**TEN-TON TERROR**
2 ounces whiskey
1 ounce French vermouth
1 ounce grapefruit juice

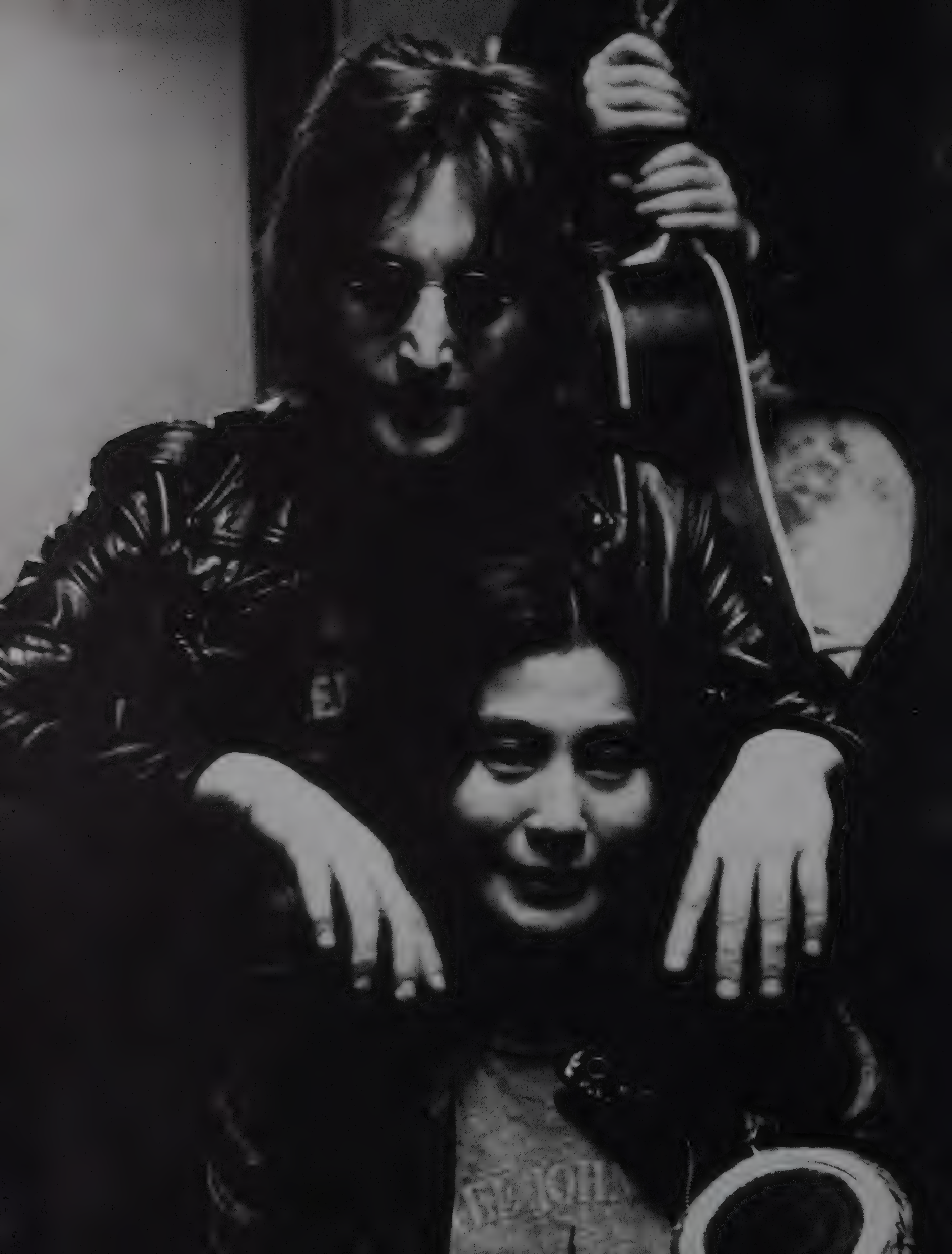
*Shake well with ice and serve with bulbous cherry.*

**BABY'S BLOOD**
1 ounce lime juice
4 ounces Jamaica rum
2 dashes Angostura bitters

*Shake with finely cracked ice.*

# CREEM™





# Free John and Yoko

**Photo by Richard Siegel**

*There was a benefit to raise money for and consciousness of the plight of John Sinclair, who was incarcerated for ten years for selling two joints to a narc. It was at the University of Michigan's Crisler Arena with a great lineup, including Bob Seger, Stevie Wonder, Archie Shepp, and Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen. Allen Ginsberg read poetry. Black Panther Bobby Seale spoke, and before he came on stage, his guards appeared in every entrance of the stadium–it was very dramatic and photogenic. We had All Access passes from the promoter, Peter Andrews, and Charlie Auringer got a lot of great shots that night. But I wanted to get an exclusive shot of the headliner for the night, John Lennon.*

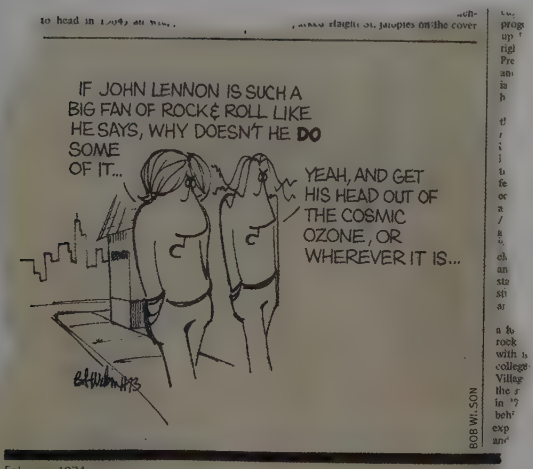
*The Ono-Lennons were being chaufered to the gig by a record company flack who happened to be my friend and a friend of the magazine. We knew when and where they were supposed to arrive, but they were late. Larry Benjamin, "LB" to his friends, had gone to the airport in his Rolls to pick up John and Yoko. Everyone assumed they were cruising, partaking of the sacraments Sinclair had been busted for.*

*I tried to stake out the back stage area where the limo was going to pull in. Andrews decided that John and Yoko shouldn't be hassled before going on stage and kicked me out of the area. This happened three or four times as the evening progressed. I protested that they were notorious publicity hounds and would not mind my presence. Peter disagreed.*

*I hid behind a curtain, sitting on some stairs, watching the unloading area through a slit. As the Rolls pulled in, before I could even stand up, Pete Andrews pulled the curtains open. I was sitting in front of the entrance to the dressing room! Pete cracked up and congratulated me on my perseverance. I got some great shots as the couple sat on the steps and gave an impromptu concert to the backstage crew.*

*Not long after the concert John Sinclair was released from prison. You're all familiar with what happened to John Lennon–if not, a movie about it will be out soon. I hope it won't be too sympathetic to the crazy motherfucker that killed him. He is missed.*

*–Ric Siegel*


IF JOHN LENNON IS SUCH A BIG FAN OF ROCK & ROLL LIKE HE SAYS, WHY DOESN'T HE **DO** SOME OF IT...
YEAH, AND GET HIS HEAD OUT OF THE COSMIC OZONE, OR WHEREVER IT IS...
BWilson 1973
BOB WILSON

February 1974

## PICTURE OF MATCHSTICK MEN • MARCH 1972

You'd think that when a Beatle visited the home of high energy, he'd have the minimal courtesy to ROCK; especially if the visit was made in order to play at a benefit for the High Priest of Heavy, John Sinclair. Especially if it were the Beatle who prided himself most on his *ability* to rock. Well . . .

You blew it, John.

It *was* quite an event, though. December tenth saw 15,000 people–mostly Ann Arbor street freaks and college kids–fill Crisler Arena, nominally the home of the University of Michigan's basketball team, to . . . well, one of the things still up in the air is just what they *were* there for.

Half of the seats had been sold out *before* John and Yoko announced the imminence of their eminence. This, one hopes, goes a little way toward destroying the principle *shibboleth* of the minions of Consciousness III: The alternative culture may not be quite so apolitical as you think, fellas.

Nonetheless, it was a singularly desultory audience. They seemed united upon only two things: a common desire to see John and Yoko rock for John and an equally mutual distaste for David Peel.

David Peel is an arrhythmic nonentity . . . what he REALLY is beggars description. Loud, boorish and ultimately repellant in his monochromatic zeal to create revolutionary dope smoking (cf. beer-drinking music) Peel got the best audience response in hours. Or at least the most. He's lucky he left with his skin. To add obvious insult to literal injury, Peel was obviously at least in part another delaying tactic. He sang his insulting ode to Bob Dylan, clowned a bit, sang some more songs (did you know the Pope smokes dope?) and in general acted cheapo cheapo while waiting, looking over his shoulder for John and Yoko to appear.

The event was beginning to dim. If John was really so interested in re-humanizing himself, what was he coming on like such a pop star for? Nothing was delivered

When they finally did appear, they were anti-climax personified. Peel had at least been attempting to play electric instruments, even though he hasn't the least notion how to rock. When John, Yoko, Jerry Rubin, Leslie Bacon and a few others took the stage to join him, they brought acoustic guitars. Is this what he thinks Bob Dylan was about?

Four songs and that was it, and they weren't four killer songs either, which might have been redeeming Here's what you got: "Attica State," "Luck of the Irish," Yoko's song for "her sisters in Ann Arbor," and the finale, "Free John Sinclair." Lennon's lyrics were dismal–"We're all mates with Attica State," "It's not fair, free John Sinclair." His playing was just as bad–acoustic! What the fuck? Only "Luck of the Irish," his IRA song, came across. And that, as "With god On Our Side," had lifted its music from Dominic Behan's "The Patriot Game" which is about the IRA in the first place.

All of a sudden we were presented with a minstrel wag who looked like he's just walked out of Vidal Sassoon's salon into an Ann Arbor coffee house. Where was the Teddy Boy we used to love? "Apathy won't get us anywhere. So flower power failed. So what? Let's start again." Primal, John, Primal. ■

CREEM Magazine was the only game in town. Lester [Bangs] was king and Ben [Edmonds] let him do what he was brilliant at.

I came to Detroit once with Ronno. Mick liked a drink, but I warned him about Lester. Lester turned up about three in the afternoon and proceeded to stay with us for the next fourteen hours. Mick was sober—I figured that around three a.m. it was finally safe to get sauced. Sure enough—4 a.m., out it came—"You don't give a fuck about the poor people." People like Lester are sadly missed in rock 'n' roll. Ben Edmonds was great too. He was slightly more reserved (as befitting his position) but just as informed. Journalists at N.M.E. and Melody Maker copied Lester. N.M.E. captured the hipness, but sadly, little of the humor. And Melody Maker's attempts were unmitigated disasters and indeed heralded their slow and steady decline.

—Ian Hunter

# DIARY OF A ROCK STAR:

## MOTT THE HOOPLE FROM THE INSIDE

BY IAN HUNTER • APRIL 1974
PHOTO BY EMERSON–LOEW

*(The following spread is an excerpt from* Diary of a Rock Star, *a documentary book by Mott the Hoople frontman Ian Hunter. In his preface, Hunter explains: "It was written as it happened; on planes, buses, in cars, hotels, dressing rooms—anywhere I could put pen to paper. It's not meant to have literary merit, nor to be a journalists' delight. No, it's more like a letter to a fan in the front row . . . a diary to keep in touch. It's meant as a buzz for the people who dig us and will never be able to go to the places we travel."*

*It was set down during the last two months of 1972, when Mott were making a tour of the States to reinforce the success of "All The Young Dudes." At that time, they were being produced by David Bowie and managed by the Bowie-Defries Mainman organization. As to the names you'll encounter in the excerpt, Mick is Mott guitarist Mick Ralphs; Pete is bassist Pete (Overend) Watts; Buff is drummer extraordinaire Buffin; and Phally is organist Verden Allen. David is Bowie and Tony is Defries. Since the book was written, both Ralphs and Allen have departed the Mott line-up, and any association with Bowie or Defries has been terminated.*

*Rather than a view from the commercial peaks Mott the Hoople scaled in the past years, it's a document from a time when they were still scuffling; clawing through the day-to-day disasters that had plagued the band for four turbulent years prior to their 1973 success, but also offers an uncommonly straightforward glimpse of the no man's land halfway up the ladder that album jackets and sales charts seldom acknowledge. —Ed.)*

**Wed. Nov. 29, 1972**

Here we are, Wednesday afternoon in Philadelphia on a grey and overcast English morning. Lee comes around and Stan is doing his usual panic bit. Nobody really is in the mood and his arm waving and shouting are subdued somewhat by several slamming doors and early morning cries of "fuck off." We sign a form for a radio station who want to record tonight's concert and put it out next Monday. Me and Tru [*Ian's wife Trudy—Ed.*] cross Walcott Street and wind up walking down Chestnut Street—me on my never-ending quest for pawnshops, and Trudy putting up with my mania sensibly. Nothing doing. Not a hock shop in sight and we get down to Market and 11th Street and read a sign that says, "On this spot Thomas Jefferson drew up the draft for the American Declaration of Independence"—it's a parking lot now. Cute how they destroy what tradition they have.

Walking back up Chestnut Street we find a place called the Record Museum. My God, I know a few people who would go mad in this place. You name it and they have it—all on original labels and all costing 65 cents. Not bad when you consider a new record costs 10 and something in England.

The catalogue is unbelievable. You name it and they've got it—from way back. All I can say is I bought 31 singles and God knows how many Mick and Pete will have. I know Mick wants the whole of Rick Nelson and the Buffalo Springfield lineup, and that's about 25 before he starts looking through everything else. Pete will go mad—he always does.

I'm still frantically underlining masterpieces in the catalogue at the hotel, when Stan starts hassling for the sound check—a necessary evil when you are short of time.

We whisk through the evening rush to up around 65th Street and there we are. Top of the bill in America for the first time! There are just over 2,000 in a 2,500-seater and that's pretty good, considering the gig was just put in Friday—only five days ago! Things start moving faster. Pete and Robin, Bowie's soundmen, turn up shattered from an all-day dash, but immediately throw in their lot for tonight's show. Now they don't get paid by us—they just do it because they want Mainman to be a family. They are inspiring, and what can you say about two blokes like that—they've got a night off and they sweat their balls off with us instead.

The sound check is great. The place is like your average ABC and everything's working but the organ, which eventually farts into life and passes Phally's hypercritical try-out.

Back to the hotel. Tony's in now with his lady, Melanie, and Sue (Bowie's hairdresser) shouts hello. She's with two other blokes in David's entourage. David and Stuey (his bodyguard) and George (photos) are on their way from Pittsburgh in a yellow cab as something went wrong with his car. He's running late if he wants to introduce us.

The amphetamine builds—I'm ready, and meet the lads in the huge somber foyer. Into the limos and up to the gig. Security police pull back barriers (big time—great feeling) and straight in the back door. The dressing rooms are OK—the bare essentials—mirrors, chairs, a bog and a couple of aluminum dustbins full of ice, beer, cola and wine; a system which English promoters never quite adopted. I wonder why.

Brownsville Station, the support band, are already playing and they're cashing in a bit on the current glam fag rage. It's a bit upsetting to watch guys who you've played with before (we were in Chicago and New Orleans with them), who were hard driving and straight, turn poovy. Perhaps the manager's been working hard on them—it's time they were getting the gigs now. Good luck to them.

It seems all these acts have never seen David perform. David is David; when he goes on stage he is a complete natural, and his act is totally valid—he doesn't pretend, but dons a cloak. He's the only one who'll come through because he is himself and the talent is there. To see ordinary performers trying to imitate the extraordinary is the original sellout. Cheap, tasteless and temporary; I hate the lack of intelligence and wild generalization in bands like these. They tend to clog the media, making it appreciably harder for the real artist to achieve recognition.

Back in the dressing room. Tony's happy; the ever-present cigar in hand. Two young guys are complaining about the lack of outlets for Philadelphia rock bands—I sympathize as I always have. Geography's got a lot to do with the make or break of a group. Brownsville are off and chants are dimly heard form the dressing room. David, Stu and George appear just in time. Embraces all round—we haven't seen each other for three months and David looks tired but great. Looks like he's not been eating again; he's the only star I know who regularly suffers from malnutrition. The charming, disarming urchin from Brixton who never misses a move or a point. Innocence, cruelty, the nearness yet the distance, all the qualities of the star he is—only *he* knows what pays for this coveted title, but I've caught glimpses of his sadness.

Anyway, it's great to be together again and out he goes to a thunderous welcome. He comes off shaking like a leaf, and we go on to the final deafening crash of the tape. He's watching and sussing all the way through. It will be him tomorrow night.

Mick does a blinding solo in "Ready for Love" and all doubt disappears after "Angeline"—it's the feeling "we've got 'em." Off we come; beers go down in 30 seconds and then wht wait for the right time. We hurriedly converse and decide to do "Dudes" and then "Honky Tonk Women." The chaos rises higher as Mott becomes six—David throwing out the harmonies with Mick and Pete. "Dudes" finishes, we acknowledge the guy who wrote our half-million seller, and then we finish on our own. A great gig—not a thing to moan about. That's two in a row—I can't believe it.

Back to the hotel now and David, although knackered from his trip, troops down to the local all-night hamburger café with our lot. Tony puts Al Jolson on the jukebox. We talk of the tours—the eternal problem of Ziggy being Ziggy and Mott being Mott. There's always media confusion which has to be handled delicately. I tell him of the groups we've seen, and he enthusiastically speaks of the New York Dolls—loves their attitude—and he's even more convinced about Iggy. Recording, too, is discussed; the relative merits of various studios, etc. Anybody thinking musicians work an hour a day are mugs. I've worked 16 hours a day for Mott since the band's creation; so have Mick, Pete, Buff and Phally. Mott has been our lives; our love life centers around it, inconveniences and long separations are demanded by it. 100% cooperation is required at all times. Attitude is a big word, if you *really* want to make it. In a group you're a diplomat, nruse, confidant, taxi driver, labor-er, electrician, tailor, designer, and a few other things I can't mention, before you even get on stage.

I may look flashy, but it's over and you're finished before you know it—if you aren't already broken by one thing it will be another. They come and they go is the old saying, and you see it. Eyes. Record company's eyes, promoter's eyes, agent's eyes, media's eyes—they're all watching for that slightest slip—which will get around like wildfire. If this sounds like self-pity, it's not meant to—you have to be realistic, and the rock business is a dirty business full stop.

### Sat. Dec. 2, 1972

The Providence (R.I.) Palace plays a small but memorable part in Mott's history. It was here on a previous tour that we did a walk-off after 10 minutes. We'd not had the all-important sound check that day and hadn't even been billed outside the theatre. When we got on the sound was awful and instead of getting better, it got worse as the guy in the sound box got more and more stoned. In short, I'd thrown my guitar across the stage and stormed out. This had produced chaos; we refused to go back on and no kidding, our treatment had been so bad that the promoter had paid up in full. So here we are again, and it promises to be another bummer. Putting us on the same bill with John McLaughlin isn't a great idea. On the one side rock 'n' roll and on the other rangeless sounds and never-ending two-chord jams from brilliant but misguided musicians.

There were about 2,700 people in the 3,200 seater and we went on first about 8:30 to good applause. Now the sound wasn't good, but it wasn't bad either, slightly blurred at the front but clearing as it go to the back of the hall and was pretty good on the balconies. All went well until just after "Ready for Love," when I started to hear spasmodic cries of "play music" and "fuck off." It came from only a few people to the right of us and I could dimly see them waving their arms about. This lot were definitely not here to see us.

I made a brief statement to the effect that they were stupid, narrow-minded bastards and we launched into "Sweet Jane." this went down well too, but I had to silence the hecklers again while Dick tried in vain to get a good grand piano sound. He didn't, and the audience had to put up with a very loud vocal and a very quiet piano throughout "Seadiver." Applause again and onto "Angeline." We must have been 2/3 of the way through when the music suddenly stopped. I was at the front without guitar, singing with a hand mike. What was happening?

Buff was off his drums, white-faced, and Pete was swearing through his mike. Phil looked bewildered and Mick shouted something about a bottle hitting his guitar. I jumped off the stage—Buff was right behind me, and Ritchie leapt from the side. Instinct led me to pointing fingers and a guy ran from his seat hurriedly collecting his coat. I screamed at him "Who was it?," and he pointed the guy out before running for cover. The bloke sat back in his seat. Search spots swooped over the now-standing crowd and he looked squarely at me as I swore at him. I knew it was him, so I let him have it—right between the eyes. The crowd erupted and Mick started the beat again. I ran back over the rail into the orchestra pit, flash bulbs popping all the way, and climbed back onto the stage . . . *rip* . . . my trousers split—oh no, not now—quick, I squatted on my haunches and sang the last verse in that position, pointing to the area of the incident. We finished and the whole crowd were up— what an ovation! The police want Mick to press charges but he won't, so they take the guy outside for a once-over. And fucking right too. Had the bottle been a couple of feet higher, it would have hit Mick's face.

### Thur. Dec. 7, 1972

We got to the gig in St. Louis last night and it was absolute bedlam. As was expected, Dick Heckstall-Smith opened, and then backstage it was a deadlock. Bloodrock were refusing to go on before or after us. Fleetwood Mac didn't want to end the show but Bloodrock wouldn't either. The arsehole promoters hadn't got a bloody clue, they just hopelessly stood there. Why do these sods promote? They'd given Bloodrock 2nd on the bill contract, and us an identical one. Bloodrock would not budge and inch and neither would we; we finally gave in at the time we'd originally planned to do and went on. The poor kids had waited so long because the promoter's totally ignorant, or extremely snidy and just led the incident occur.

What with no sound check and all the hassles backstage, we were going on pretty miserable. If ever a gig should have been pulled out, it was this one. Tony just wasn't sure of the procedure on down-the-bill acts and let it happen. We went on even though we shouldn't have. The sound, although good out front (as we found out afterwards) was terrible onstage. We slowly dissolved in front of a curious crowd. Two spots comprised the complete lighting system, Bloodrock not even allowing on of their lights to be used. And the spots careened crazily around the stage missing most of the points in the music. We bravely carried on, me waggling my arse in a none-too-hopeful attempt to attract a few females. What an act. I felt like a prostitute—it was nothing to do wit music. It was a professional con, forced on us by circumstances, and we hated every second of it.

A good ovation but stamping died all too quickly for reappearance, and we trooped angrily back to the dressing room. The atmosphere was electric. We can't stand bummers, especially those not our fault. Briefly, we'd sold out on the gig and it left a horrible taste in our mouth. We all knew it should have been a walk out. We had every right in doing it, but it's too late now; we played.

We try to discuss it seriously and Bob C., a light man who's watching us and getting ready to light the 5 or 6 other headliners we have to do, gives us the benefit of his considerable experience. Big Bob reckons on him going out early with Ritchie the next day to Springfield and checking out the lay of the land. If it's at all dodgy Tony will cancel it altogether. By now Bloodrock have actually gone on and we have a quick look at them before leaving.

I turned, and at the side of the stage the little assistant guy was talking to a couple of the at least 50 chicks who were hanging around. As a parting gesture, as I passed him I whispered "that's what happens when you treat your groups like shit." I walked onto the ramp, happened to turn and saw him waving his fists egged on by the girls, who'll agree with anything and anybody. I walked back and calmly shouted, "The people you work for are a bunch of utter cunts" into his face.

"What?" came a yell. And five guys, one who I knew as a promoter, ran over. "What are you talking about?"

"You're useless. You shouldn't be allowed to run gigs."

"You jackass, get out of here. Go on, get out you jackass, you jumped-up cunt. Your group sucks. Get out before I put a hole in yuh.

"Bollocks, you load of idiots—you fuckin' idiots.

The little one came fist held back and I squared onto him. He held back and the promoter came up near—really near. He threatened and I just stood there facing them. The blood had gone from my face and my lips were quivering. Tony pulled them away as calm as ever and they waved their fists and yelled.

We walked down to the lower level. My lips were jerking and I was in that cold rage you get when nothing could hurt you. Tony just took me out and we got in the car without exchanging a word. I don't know what he must have thought; I knew what I thought though. I knew I had been what the guy said I'd been. A jackass. I knew the group had been bad, but what I also knew was this pathetic apology for a promotion by complete idiots made us like that. The band had missed the whole episode, Tony and I being the last out of the Convention Hall and now they all ached to go since they were put in the picture.

The streets were silent as we traveled back to the hotel. How was I going to get rid of the rage? As Pete and I laid on our beds, we talked of the suspicious circumstances of Wishbone Ash's disappearing equipment from the same town, putting them into debt again on new gear and breaking off their tour halfway through. The mirror in the room broke at the top from my badly aimed ashtray. Pete expertly finished the job off with a tumbler.

### Sat. Dec. 9, 1972

New York. Angela Bowie rings up arranging a tentative party with Bowie, the Spiders and ourselves after David finishes recording but it's not certain, just a maybe. David rings Mick, too, to find out how Roxy Music went. He never misses keeping up the tabs on the competition. Tony's out Christmas shopping with Melanie and it's been decided that Stuart and Zee, David's heavy men, will now accompany us on the rest of the tour, owing to the St. Louis incident.

Penny Valentine showed her ignorance when confusing the reasons for David having Zee and Stu on his tour. They are not supposed to protect him from over-zealous fans, they're just there to keep you from maniacs who haunt British musicians every time you visit the states. Today I took a walk to the Sam Ash Music Store and on the way a guy asked me if I'd like to jam in the village. I politely (and I mean *politely*) declined. He then changed from a groovy guy to a complete bastard. "You ginger-headed cunt, who do you think you are. A big-headed bastard musician. You're all cunts!" Acid freaks stare at you and you don't know what is going through their minds. All sorts of scenes I can't handle. I'm not a heavy, I just sing. I just want to stay nice and sane. I don't need all this. God knows what old Rod, Elton or Jeff go through. Perhaps we're alright where we are; forever on the way up. ■

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# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")

BOB ALFORD

## DAVE EDMUNDS

**HOME:** Plynth-yndyr-Ryvyera-Ryckfyelyd, Wales.

**AGE:** Decreases proportionately as Nick Lowe's increases.

**PROFESSION:** Demonstrating the Gibson Les Paul for interested consumers everywhere.

**HOBBIES:** Slaking a heavy photographic jones, planning Rockpile albums, guessing Nick's hair color, making Elvis Costello look tall.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *How To Use A $20 Million Recording Studio To Produce The Sound Of Scratchy 78s* by Blind Boy Strummer.

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Honored with a lifetime subscription to *GQ*, while remaining Rockpilers were feted by *Dog World*.

**QUOTE:** "Won't you take me to funky town? Won't you take me *down* to funky town?"

**PROFILE:** Beginning with a lovely-sculptured Sabre Dance, this minute studio whiz kept-a-rockin' 'til the world heard him knockin'. The stray cat found stardust at his feet and produced 'til he got Stiff; emerging at the top of the Rockpile, credibility intact, he knows his Swan Song won't be heard for years . . .

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

BOY HOWDY!
Creem

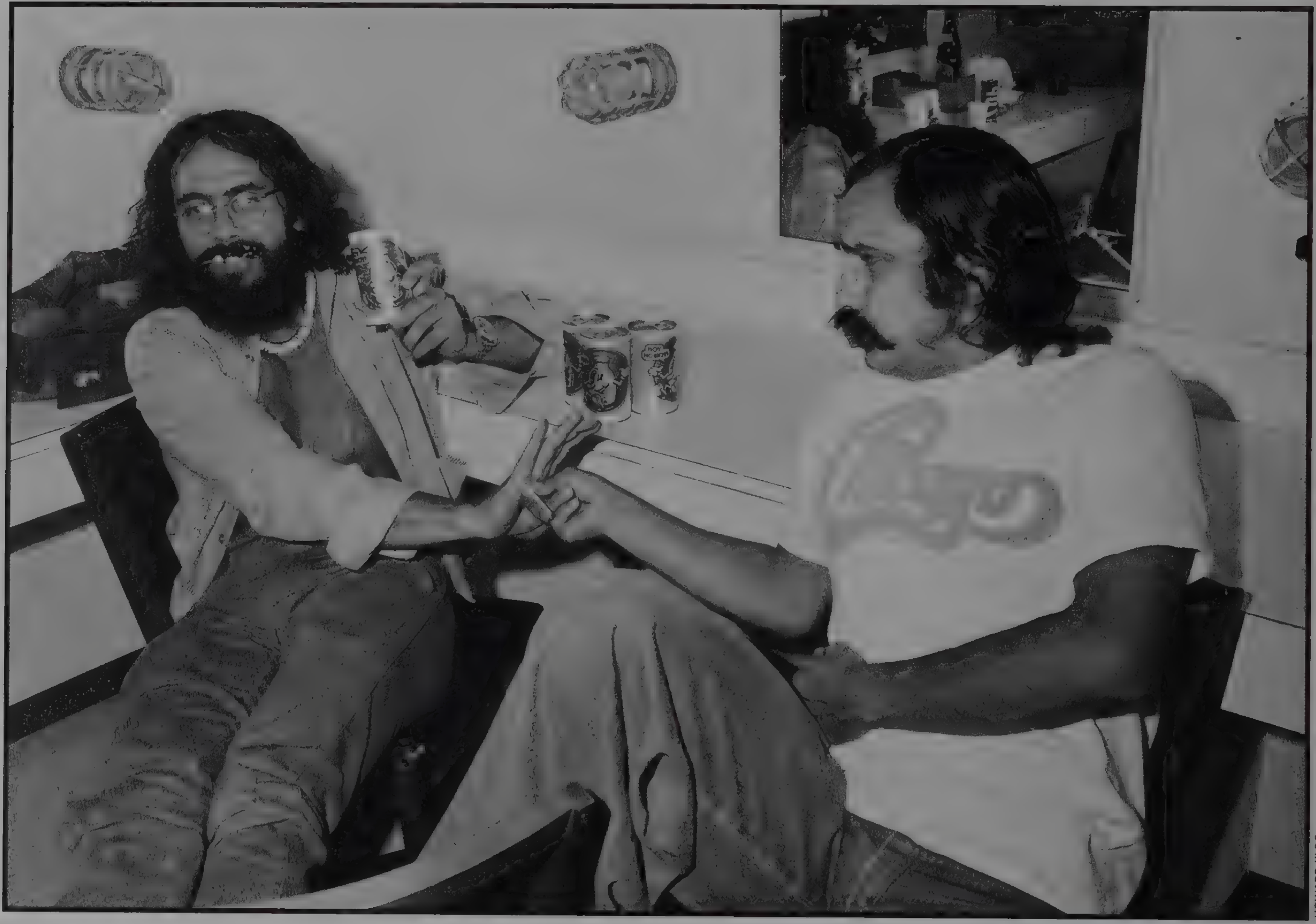
**Authentic** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

BOY HOWDY! ™

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")



HOWARD KLOC

# CHEECH & CHONG

**HOME:** Far out.

**AGE:** Old enough to remember Lenny Bruce.

**PROFESSION:** Serving up a steaming smorgasbord of socio-narcotic yuj-yuks for audiences who *aren't* old enough to remember Lenny Bruce.

**HOBBIES:** Surveying bathroom walls and sifting through the garbage bins of chicano housing projects in search of new material.

**LAST BOOK READ:** The *Tortilla Flat* outtakes.

**QUOTE:** "Hey, man, why did the *************, man, ***********, man, *****, man, ************ man? To get to the other side, man?"

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Staying out of jail.

**PROFILE:** These two loons—one an ex-rock critic, the other a former topless bar manager—have turned a handsome profit from being lazy, hairy, good-for-nothing, unwashed, foul-mouthed, dope-taking grease-ball hippies. The '60s dream realized. Mescaline tacos, anyone?

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

**Authentic** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

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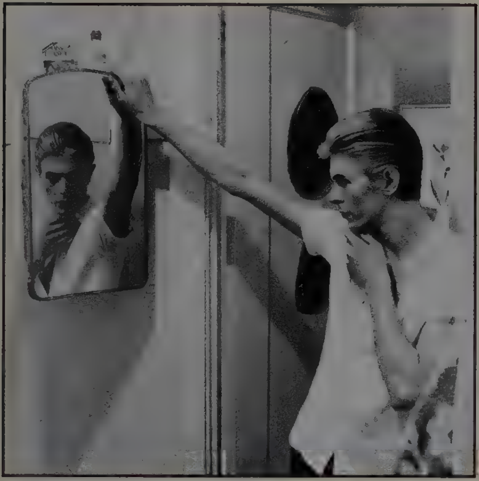
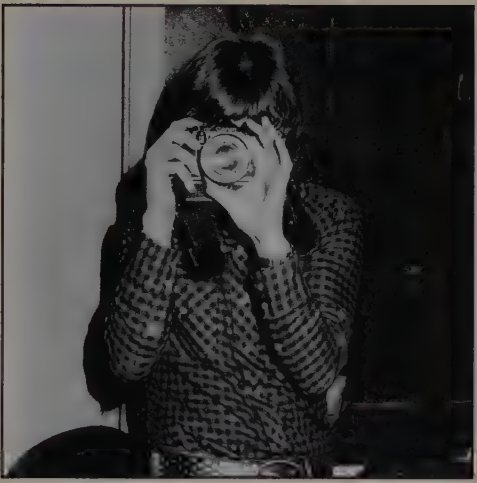
# BACKSTAGE

## WHERE THE STARS TANK UP & LET THEIR IMAGES DOWN



Trendsetter Bowie decides that chin touching will become the next big thing.



"Say CREEEEM!"

Forming 'The Booze Brothers' was a great idea until John & Stiv sobered up.

Iggy shows Elton the fine art of chin touching.

Lenny shows David Jo and Dee Dee how to do the hip shake, baby.

"Omigawd it's Kim Fowley! Quick, pretend you're my husband!"

People
MARISA BERENSON

"Who're you calling Meathead, Meathead?"

JOHN COLLIER

ALL PHOTOS CREEM PHOTO ARCHIVE EXCEPT WHERE INDICATED

# A CREEM DREEM REMEMBERS

*CREEM magazine wasn't just a monthly zine to some of us—it was a Pop Culture religion! Unlike most of the other publications of the day, CREEM created it's own stars and regular monthly attractions. If it was in CREEM, it was cool—if CREEM made fun of you, it was considered affection. If they liked your music and wrote about it, you felt like you'd arrived. In 1980 CREEM picked Stiv and I as the "Couple Of The Year" beating out Gene Simmons and Cher for the Top Slot. Gene would tease me every time he saw me for that one. He thought Stiv and I should capitalize on it and have our own variety show much like Sonny & Cher.*

*The writers for CREEM were not only the best but by far some of the funniest. CREEM humor was legendary and could be scathing to say the least. Rick Johnson had more hits out on his life by every rock star in the universe than a mafia kingpin!! What a wit. When I met him I gave him a huge hug and kiss only to have him whimper to me "but don't you hate me Bebe?" I replied "No, I don't hate you dickweed, I want to win you over forever!" We bonded over that and went on to discuss Einstein and what he would have thought of Iggy Pop.*

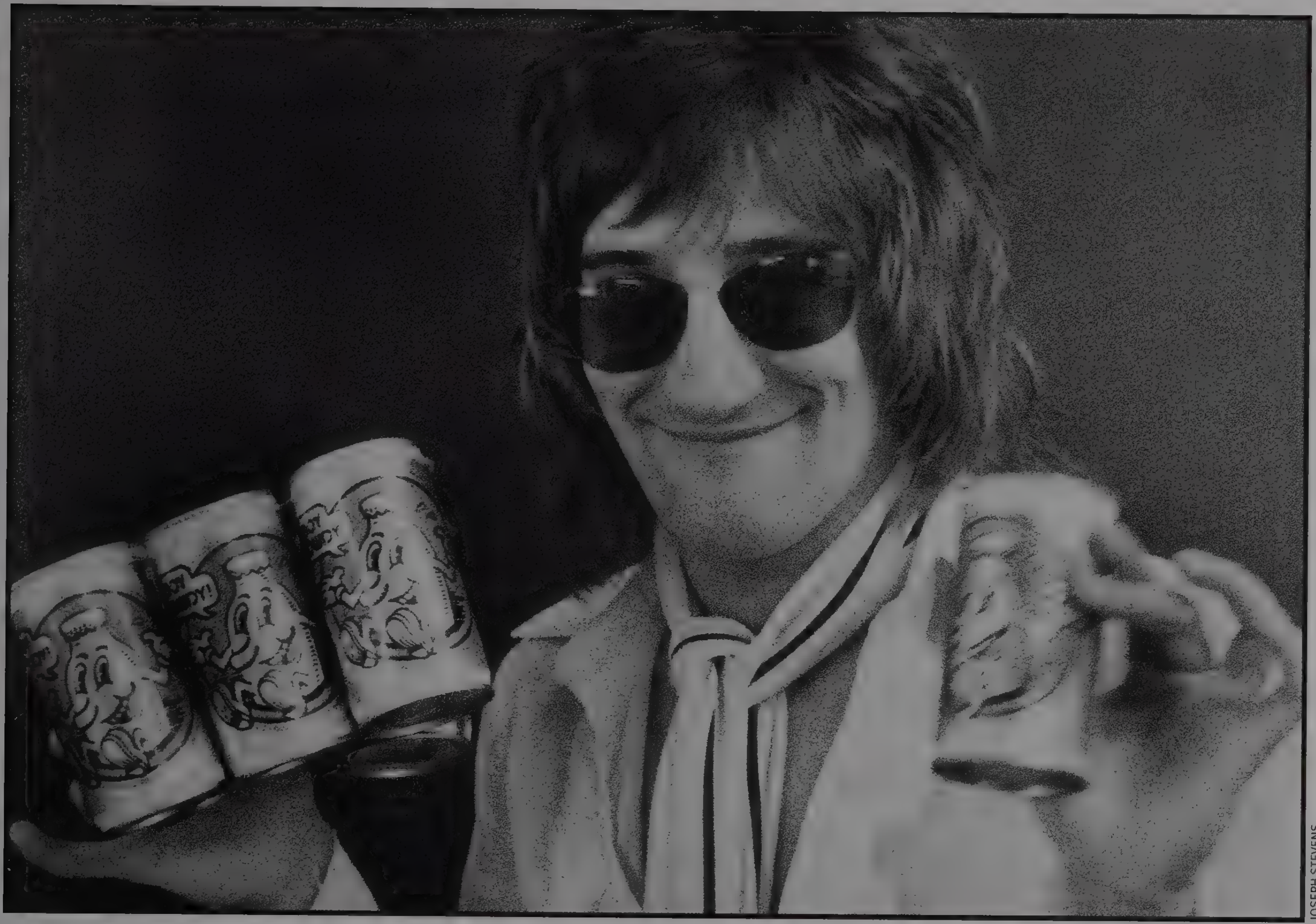
*I felt like the mascot—the CREEM female ideal. I'll always cherish my days as a CREEM Pin Up Queen.*

*—Bebe Buell*

PHOTO BY RICHARD CREAMER

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")



JOSEPH STEVENS

# ROD STEWART

**HOME:** Last House on the left.

**HOME:** Wherever he drops.

**AGE:** Somewhere between adolescence, senescence, and 86 proof.

**PROFESSION:** Rousing the bowsers in his band and the peanut gallery while making a party of life and a profit off that.

**HOBBIES:** Beaming benevolently. Forgetting what day it is.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *Tom Brown's School Days* by Thomas Hughes.

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Convincing a soccer ball to come back to the Holiday Inn with him.

**QUOTE:** "As long as you're up, get me a Grant's, Johnny Walker, Beefeater, Tanqueray, Courvoisier, Hennessy, Watney's Guinness. . ."

**PROFILE:** The indiscreet charm of the belated bourgeoisie. The pub-prancing personification of Everysod. The last [perhaps only] Limey lout-as-star not consumed by ego.

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

*Authentic*

*CREEM—and it's home town Detroit—held the Faces near and dear, they always managed to track us down no matter which hotel had shown us the door. I do remember some rather sordid nights with some unsavory magazine staffers that are best left as nothing more than stains on that great tapestry of life.*

# T.Rex

# “What They Tried To Do With Bowie Was Create Another Marc Bolan”

BY CAMERON CROWE · JULY 1973 · PHOTO BY KEITH MORRIS

Just eighteen months ago, T.Rex was being loudly heralded as the next *big thing*, the next phenomenon, the next Beatles (John and Ringo nodded in agreement).

They—or *he*, being that T.Rex is only Marc Bolan and whoever else he happens to bring along—had racked up an amazing string of chart-topping singles in England, and the success of "Bang A Gong" seemed to point to a repetition of that triumph here.

It didn't happen. We're still waiting for a follow-up hit to "Bang A Gong," and the lack of any substantial singles action has been a dominant factor in T.Rex relative failure. The massive hype didn't help much either. Its backlash created a situation where the prospective audience was forced to make a judgment before they'd heard the band, and it hurt. Many of the dates on the last tour were cancelled to avoid embarrassment of half-filled houses. Their albums have sold steadily if unspectacularly, and while it indicates that there's a market for T.Rex in this country, the size of that market remains a disappointment in light of what had been expected.

Cameron Crowe talked to Marc Bolan on that last tour and found him to be the same personable egomaniac he's been since the Tyrannosaurus Rex days, seemingly untouched by his failure to crack the biggest market of them all. But that is certainly Bolan's charm, and may be the source of whatever measure of success he's achieved so far. He carries himself like a star: relaxed, self-confident, slightly arrogant and always ready to assume victory even in the midst of defeat. He's the ultimate *punque*. If he isn't the Beatles, he's at least colorful, and yes, maybe even loveable.

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The papers here seem to be playing up a feud between David Bowie and yourself . . .
Are they? In England, they tried to sell his records by saying in the ads that they were "high in the American charts," when in actuality they were only 144th. Then, media-wise, they created me into something of a monster. They'd put me on the cover of their papers and sell a million more copies than they usually sell; then suddenly, because I wouldn't talk with them as much as I did when I first started, they'd say I hated David Bowie.

Essentially what they tried to do with Bowie was create another Marc Bolan, but the interest with the kids was not there. His concerts have not done well over there. "Starman" only got to about twelve on the charts, which is not good. And the other single didn't happen at all—"John, I'm Only Dancing"—it was very bad actually. I've known David for about five years and he's all right. I've played on a lot of his records.

It's a commercial maneuver. I mean, I don't consider David to be even remotely near big enough to give me any competition. At the time the feud story hit England, my records were number one, and they stayed number one while David's never came near. I don't think that David has anywhere near the charisma or balls that I have. Or Alice has. Or Donny Osmond has got. He's *not* gonna make it, in any sort of way. The papers try and manufacture a lot of things. They tried to do something with Slade. Slade is just a jive little group who are quite sweet and bang about a lot. They're very valid for what they do, but I don't think anyone can seriously compare them to what I do. Whether you think I'm good or bad, I'm still the best-selling poet in England. I don't think anyone in Slade can write four words. And I don't mean to be condescending; they're nice people.

Do you feel your position in England is temporary??
I think life is temporary; on that level, yes. On the other aspect, no. There's no way I can't continue in England. These past two years I've been ground down people's throats in Europe so hard that they'd need a brain-washing machine to get off the Marc Bolan picture. They've gotten so much, they can't erase it. It's like, whether you like it or not, you're always gonna know who Elvis Presley is. It's like that with me. I'm always on the front of the national papers; I'm always on television. It's different from America, you see, because you have so much media here that a lot of it washes over you. In Europe, you're sort of given one thing at a time.

Are you saying then, that it's easier to create a phenomenon in England?
Well, it always seems like fame happens overnight for bands in England. Normally, a band that has happened very quickly, but it actually took a year-and-a-half. Roxy Music has taken two years.

How about Argent . . . ?
Argent will never make it because they don't have the right feel. You have to have a certain feel; a certain something. I meant, ninety-five percent of my success is the way I *look*. The Beatles were *mop-tops*. The Stones were dirty, never-washed bad boys. That's what people pick up on. The music is secondary. You do have to have good music, though, after the initial physical contact. But initially, it's got nothing to do with music.

Isn't that kind of insulting?
No; I'm generalizing. It's not everyone. Sometimes, it's a person's character . . . like Marlon Brando. I've always gone to see Marlon Brando; I've seen every film he's ever done. He's interesting, like Jean Moreau, James Dean, whoever. Going back to the David Bowie thing, his manager is a weird sort of dude. After their one minor hit record, he was saying 'David, man, he's too big for this rock 'n' roll thing. I see him branching out into movies. I see him as the next James Dean.' After that, *nothing*. It's all premature wanking. He just doesn't have that sort of quality. I do. I always have. Rod Stewart has it in his own mad way. Elton John has it. Mick Jagger has it. Michael Jackson has that quality. David Bowie doesn't, I'm sorry to say.

I don't care if anyone agrees with me, but I've never done anything wrong in my whole life. I've spent a couple years starving and shit, but I've always been able. I was a male model for a while, and was making all kinds of bucks, but I quit because I just didn't like it. You work at what you do; you learn your craft. I never thought that I couldn't do anything. I don't put restrictions on myself. Anyone who's a true artist doesn't. I don't believe in pop stars. I could own this hotel if I wanted to. I could go downstairs and buy it right now, but what does that mean. *C'mon*. It's the people that dig that scene that are disturbed. I use my ego to get rid of the hang-ups that I have. Fortunately, I know what they are and they don't hang me up. I use them to pay my rent.

You seem to be getting more involved with movies . . . ?
I think it's a natural progression for anyone. I want to do my own equivalents of *Jailhouse Rock* and *Girls, Girls, Girls*. I find it very interesting. It's a different media and it offers different possibilities. Recording still turns me on, though. I still like to record. I've never written a bad song; I wouldn't know how to. The Slider was kinda low-key, but this next album (Tanx —Ed.) is much more of a rock 'n' roll album. It's so energy-rock it's frightening.

But I look at everything as temporary, to be honest. I don't consider myself to be successful. On the outside terms I am, but I don't think I've even started. Right now I'm the biggest selling poet in England. I hope to be even bigger. When I'm 75, I'll be able to tell you whether I've truly been successful or not.

Screamin'

BY NICK TOSCHES • AUGUST 1973 • PHOTO BY VAL WILMER

**A year, two years ago, he stayed perpetually oiled. Black & White Scotch. Preserved in alcohol, he used to say. Drunk. Once, in the early '60s, traveling from Jamaica to Boston, he wound up in Buffalo after boarding the wrong plane at what was then, in those days before the donkey's demise, Idlewild Airport in New York. Blearily thinking himself to be in Bean Town, he hopped a taxi and asked to be taken to a certain hotel where he had a reservation. The hackie told him there was no such address, no such hotel. Jay got pissed, jumped out of the cab and found a couple of Buffalo's finest. They told him the same thing. It wasn't until later that evening, whilst sobering up in the clink, that he realized he was in the wrong city. Which is pretty drunk.**

**He's on the wagon these days, though. One of those cyclical drying-out periods. Coffee, lots of coffee. Orange juice. Not even a beer. And cigarettes. He smokes Luckies. Sometimes he rolls his own Buglers, but right now it's Luckies.**

**He's living in some seedy hotel room nine floors above mid-town Broadway in Manhattan with his wife Jinny and an obnoxious four-month-old Siamese cat named Cookie. There's a *Jet* calendar on the wall. Hats of various degrees of weirdness on nails over the bed. The TV's on, but no volume. He's sitting on the bed in a wool knit hat, Hawaiian sport shirt and horn-rimmed glasses, taping a Frank Sinatra album off his record player. There's a little ceramic foot-shaped ashtray next to him where he snuffs his Luckies. He hasn't been shaving lately and he's not overly enthused about having his picture taken.**

# Jay Hawkins

There are a slew of reel-to-reel tapes lying around, stuff he recorded over the years for sundry record companies that never got off the shelf. There's one with a label that says "Game of Love" on it. Thinking that it was a cut of Screamin' Jay doing the Wayne Fontana & The Mindbenders song, I ask him to put it on. He looked at me as if I had just said something I wasn't supposed to say. He turned to his wife and said, "Did you hear which song he wants to hear?" She gives him a dirty look. He makes with the little noises of resignation and hooks the tape up.

His slurred voice comes out over the tape, addressing some imaginary audience: *"We are here tonight, ladies and gentlemen, laying down some fine sounds that you haven't heard and probably will never hear on the radio, simply because Decca is a stupid-ass record company and refuses to . . . "*

He laughs. "I didn't mean for you to hear that." He hits the Fast Forward switch until he finds "Game of Love."

It's not the old Wayne Fontana song, it's a Screamin' Jay original, a slow, ballad-type thing about some guy caught between his wife and fresh cunt and how he has to choose between one and the other. As the song progresses, Jay's wife grows ostensibly more and more pissed-off. I'm beginning to feel like I'm in a movie.

"All right, Jinny, you win," he spits out as the song fades off

"Did you listen closely to that song? Did you?" Jinny flares back at him in her Filipino accent.

"Will you come *on*," Jay moans, "the lyrics keep repeating over and over and over and over and over that the wife finally won, so what's the problem? What's the argument? The tune is dedicated to the *wife*. You understand?"

"Yeah," shouts the wife, things getting progressively more unreal, "but at the end it says 'I'm gonna love you forever.' Now *what* does that imply, huh?"

"Just what it says! 'I'm gonna love you forever!' I'm talkin' to the *wife!*"

"Don't give me that! What you're saying is that the wife won but at the same time you're gonna love this other woman forever."

"Oh, for Godsakes, you misinterpret it!"

"No, no. Not me. Maybe *you* do!"

"Me? Come *on*, Jinny, who recorded the goddam thing?!"

"You! And the song says you're in love with this other . . . "

"Oh, come on, that's enough! I'm *finished*, I don't got no more to say."

"Well, then, you shouldn't have brought it up."

"God*dam!* Nick wanted to hear the tune! Blame Nick!"

"Well, you know, then, you, you don't have to . . . "

"Oh, man, come on, let's not have an argument, it's only a goddam *song*."

At the age of 43, it's been over 15 years since Screamin' Jay Hawkins recorded "I Put a Spell on You."

"I originally wrote the song 'cause at that time I was going out with some girl who decided that she was gonna put me down. I decided that I didn't want her to put me down, so I wrote a song to her. And the song was called "I Put a Spell on You."

"I had messed around with about three different companies prior to going to Columbia. 'I Put a Spell on You' was actually released prior to Okeh, which was a subsidiary of Columbia. It was released on the Grand label in Philadelphia. It was the same song, but it was a sweet ballad. No gimmicks. No groans. No screams. No moans. Just a ballad. And then I got picked up by Columbia.

"Arnold Makson was the head of Columbia at the time, and he felt we had to do something different in regards to the song. So he brought in a case of Italian Swiss Colony Muscatel and we all got our heads bent. Me, Panama Francis, Al Lukas, Big Al Sears, LeRoy Kirkland, Sam "The Man" Taylor, Mickey "Guitar" Baker. We all got blind drunk. Ten days later, the record came out on the Okeh label. I listened to it and I heard all those drunken screams and groans and yells. And that's how I became Screamin' Jay Hawkins."

# CREEM'S PROFILES
(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")

BOB ALFORD

# THE CARS

**HOME:** Carport, Connecticut.

**AGE:** The sticker says they're '78 models, but some of the options date back to the '50s.

**PROFESSION:** Spewing aural hydrocarbons into the American radiosphere; tranporting commuterpthrongs, via boulevards of bliss, to cities of semi-sedation.

**HOBBIES:** Littering highways with wads of flat-but-awfully-wide rabbit, skunk and Bambi carcasses; tire-iron tourneys; Ziebart weekends.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *Removing Sparrows From Chrome Radiator Shrouds* by Mr. Goodwrench.

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Avoided getting cast in *Gumball Rally, Death Race 2000* or any Burt Reynolds movies.

**QUOTE:** "Actually, the world needs more Ocaseks and violence."

**PROFILE:** Responsible for more accidental fatalities in this country than any other single factor, this death-to-discombile has been chopped, overhauled, galvanized and heavy metal-flaked; with the enigma of the Edsel, the chutzpah of the Hudson, the convenience of the Corvair and the quaint nurditude of the Nash, these guys ought to meet E.P.A. standards for quite a while.

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

***Authentic*** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

BOY HOWDY! ™

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**

When the Okeh version of "I Put a Spell on You" hit the transistor scene in 1956, it became, to put things mildly, a sensation. The collective pubes of the breathing universe were brashly tweaked by this human known as Screamin' Jay, a gent who not only puked forth one of the first truly rock 'n' roll retch-forms to sully the cultural doilies of America, but who also seemed to fuck, shit, piss, fart, and do the Dallas Two-Step with his larynx.

The record sold a quarter of a million copies. Puritans and mores-punks across the nation felt that the song's closing segment was an aural portrait of unimaginably heinous goings-on. Screamin' Jay's vocal hallucinations were accused of being invocative of everything from cannibalism to fucking your baby sister in the heinie. A concession was made: the groan-coda was censored from the song. Not enough, screamed American mom-hood, driven sleepless by spectral visions of their 12-year-old daughters being forced to suck this nefarious cannibal's 14" dong under the threat of a curare-dipped blow-dart. The song was completely banned from radio. But the sticky teenage mid-brains would not be so easily allayed. The record went on to sell another quarter-million copies by word of mouth.

Jalacy Hawkirts went on the road. Jalacy Hawkins encountered certain problems, problems both of the soul and of the meat.

"I didn't know what I had done. This record comes out and I've created a monster. Man, it was *weird*. I was forced to live the life of a monster. I'd go to do my act at Rockland Palace and there'd be all these goddam mothers walking the street with picket signs: WE DON'T WANT OUR DAUGHTERS TO LOOK AT SCREAMIN' JAY HAWKINS! I mean, I'm some kinda bogeyman. I come outa coffins. Skulls, snakes, crawlin' hands, fire and all that mess."

He had troubles with the caskets he used in his act also. He first used one in 1956 at an Alan Freed Show at the Paramount in New York. For his first few shows he used rented coffins, which usually set him back about $50 a throw. Then, the National Coffin Association got on to him and accused him of "making fun of the dead." They sent word around to all the funeral parlors not to rent any more coffins to one Mr. Jalacy Hawkins. He finally bought his own for $850.

Jay remembers some unpleasant run-ins with certain notable good guys of the early rock scenario.

"Somewhere around 1956 or so, there was this guy by the name of Bob Horn who did *American Bandstand* from the Philadelphia Arena, which was located at 46th and Market, in West Philadelphia. He got busted for a certain reason which isn't necessary to discuss at the present time, and that's when Dick Clark took over *Bandstand*. And when he did, he started off at the Steel Pier in Atlantic City, New Jersey. He called me to open his first show for him. He was so pleased with the opening that he asked me to stay over and do the show the second day also. His parting words to me were, 'If I can ever do anything for you, don't hesitate to call me.' And then when I made 'Shattered' and a few other records for Decca, I sent word to Dick Clark, asking him if he would please play my records on his show. The reply which I got back was: 'Who's Screamin' Jay Hawkins?' So I said, To hell with you too, Jack. Man, there's some assholes in this business, some real assholes. People forget. Quickly."

And then there's Jay's First meeting with Paul Anka, formerly of "Diana"–"Lonely Boy"–"Puppy Love" fame, who's currently occupied with Bunetta-Anka Management and hosting cerebral palsy telethons:

"In 1957, I was on a show with the Cadillacs, Billy Williams, Billy & Lillie Ford, and Fats Domino. A young kid by the name of Paul Anka was on the show. He had just had a hit tune out called 'Diana.' I'm already tired, I just come off the road. Fats Domino was slated to close the show, but Fats cancelled out for some reason which we don't have to go into here. My manager asked me to go on in Fats Domino's spot. So I insisted on the closing spot on the show, and I was politely told that Paul Anka was going to close the show. I said, 'To hell with Paul Anka.' So Paul Anka walks over to me and he says, 'I'll come to your funeral.' What a goddam punk."

After a few years, Jay got sick of things. He felt, and still feels, that there was some vaguely organized conspiracy that kept his records from getting airplay after 'I Put a Spell on You'. His Epic albums went nowhere.

"I guess I've rubbed a lot of people the wrong way, but when you work your heart out for somebody and they pay you half your money in cash and the other half by check and that check bounces, or they stop payment on it, or you spend your bread travellin' to a gig and work hard and then some cat stands there with five or six musclemen and tells you that he ain't gonna pay you 'cause he didn't make his money, you get to the point where you start questioning things . . . .

"I used to go with a girl in Philadelphia. Some disc-jockey hit her. I punched his face. He never played any of my records again . . . ."

"In those days, a nigger wasn't supposed to talk back, wasn't supposed to open his goddam mouth. Wasn't even supposed to say the word 'nigger.' Now things have changed cause they found out that some of those niggers will kill ya. It's as simple as that: in those days nobody fought back . . . I can't be concerned with other people, cause I'm a nigger and I speak from a nigger's view point . . .

"I got fed up. I went to Honolulu for ten years 'cause I figured the world wasn't ready for me. In the meantime, all these people are recording my goddam stuff. Nina Simone. Alan Price. The Animals. Creedence Clearwater Revival. The Who. The Trackers. Them. Manfred Mann. The Seekers. Audience. Arthur Brown. Melvin Van Peebles copied my whole act and put it on Broadway . . .

"I mean, I've had some piss luck. All those people 'cept me having hits with my songs. I started Chuck Willis wearin' turbans. I started Little Richard wearin' capes. Lord Sutch. Arthur Brown. Look at *Shaft*. Look at *Blacula*. They're all usin' coffins. Everybody at one time or another has taken a little something from me and I get this impression that everybody's going places with what I was doing fifteen goddam years ago. Everybody but me . . .

"Decca promised me the *world* if I'd only record for them. So what happened? Nothing. The record doesn't even get *played* on the radio *once* . .

"Jesus, I recorded a country & western song for Phillips ('Too Many Teardrops'). I mean, that song was *something*. The steel guitar player was from the California Symphony Orchestra and the rest of the band were jazz musicians. So what does the record company do. They only release the record in *Hawaii!* Did you ever in your life hear of anything like that?

"I recorded 'Itty Bitty Pretty One' recently, and what happens? A week later the Jackson Five record it and have a hit with it and meanwhile the company I cut it for (Hot Line) goes bankrupt and the record never gets distributed. It doesn't make sense to me . . . "

Hawkins' proclivity toward continually receiving the faecal end of the stick in his native country is fortunately somewhat offset by the appreciation, though minimal, he has accrued Over There.

His bimonthly royalty statements always include passably nice-sized residuals from England, Germany, Istanbul, Australia, Austria, Japan, Mexico, Portugal, Spain, Finland, and other such places.

Jay's "Constipation Blues" (*"It was the first time I'd ever been constipated so I decided to put it on wax. To this day I don't know what brought it on. I thought it was pretty unusual, y'know? I was in the hospital at the time and I said to myself, a subject like this must be put to music"*) was a smash hit in Japan, and only Japan, in 1968. (*"I guess the pains of not bein' able to get it out were understood by the Japanese."*)

These days, Screamin' Jay is a bit more sedate. He's getting ready for an extended concert tour of France. He recently recorded Paul McCartney's "Monkberry Moon Delight" (which McCartney once said was inspired by Jay in the first place) on the Queen Bee label. And he seems to be more shit-tired of the old Screamin' Jay Hawkins phantasm-image than ever.

"If it were up to me I wouldn't be Screamin' Jay Hawkins. My screamin' was always just my way of being happy on stage. James Brown, he does an awful lot of screamin' himself, but he didn't become Screamin' James Brown.

"I mean, I've got a voice. Why can't people just take me as a regular singer without makin' a bogeyman out of me? My musical background is people like Roy Milton, Wynonie Harris, Roy Brown, Eddie 'Cleanhead' Vinson, Jay McShann, Louis Jordan, Varetta Dillard, Big Maybelle, Roy Hamilton, people like that. I come along and get a little weird and all of a sudden I'm a monster or something, people won't listen to me as a singer. I'm some kind of monster. I don't wanna be a black Vincent Price (*Jay was offered the title role in* Blacula *by Jack Hammer, which he turned down*). I'm sick of it! I hate it! I wanna do goddam opera! I wanna *sing!* I wanna do *Figaro!* I wanna do *Le Sacre du Printemps!* 'Ave Maria'! 'The Lord's Prayer'! I wanna do real *singing*. I'm sick of being a monster." ■

*CREEM magazine was great. It had punk credibility way before we came around. All of our favorite bands were featured there and it had the coolest writers. It had a gritty, from the streets, kind of quality that made it really a fun read for us. When we found out that we were going to appear in CREEM we knew we had arrived.*

*—Tommy Ramone*

# Star's Cars

## RAMONES

April 1978

President Carter would like to thank the Ram-ons personally for buying this energy efficient buggy and setting a sterling example to glue sniffers everywhere. With such options as 485 air conditioning (4 windows out, 85 mph); streamlined design for the least wind resistance (the folks as Fast Eddie's A-1 Used Cars assured them the stripped-down look was definitely "in" this year); a sturdy "six" so Joey can accelerate past low-lying bums; and the lack of any option that anybody in their right mind would want to steal while the boys are quaffing brew at CBGB's or going to the discotheque a go-go, this Pinto run-run-Runaround is undoubtedly the most coveted heap amongst the kids of the Brooklyn Bridge. Anybody gotta jump?

"Well Len!
What say we
promenade
through the
park!"

an-drog-y-ny (an-droj'ə-ni), n. 1. both male
and female in one; hermaphroditism. 2. th
most consp[illegible] trend in 1973 rock 'n' rol

# ANDROGYNY IN ROCK

Sometime after the rock started rolling, it became quite obvious that not all the males in the audience were looking on Elvis and company with merely imitative longings. There were other plans afoot for that magnificent Pelvis, it was muttered in a zillion locker rooms. And indeed, it was also muttered, Elvis might have been looking on some of the gazers a mite fondly himself. Like almost every other rocker who has been rumored to be uh . . . gay, Elvis cleared himself of that charge by marrying and fathering a child.

Perhaps the father of all those nasty rumors (if either nasty or rumor they were) was poor Johnny Ray. Poor, not because he mightn't have been "straight," but because his bus station soirees kept getting interrupted by the gendarmes, damaging his career beyond repair in that more puritan area.

Thereafter, any remotely rebellious singer who has an inkling of falsetto range was (reportedly) a homosexual. Some diverted attention from themselves by other means. Some, like Little Richard, it must be admitted, is as much the Queen of Rock as Elvis is the King. Richard had everything: falsetto, long, splendorous curls, even billed himself as the Bronze Liberace–you couldn't believe it was only because both were pianists. "Black faggot" was not too nice a term, unfortunately . . . but black before "faggot" anyhow.

Whatever the chronological continuum, it is nonetheless true that rock has been almost exclusively male during its 20-year existence. And, though the pleasures of heterosexual love have sometimes been sung in more than slightly ambiguous terms, the dominant trend has been (until lately) to studmanship. This has occasionally proved painful even for the performers. Smokey Robinson recalls being torturously embarrassed by audiences who thought it was his wife, not himself, who sang those early, high-pitched Miracles hits.

Even the heralded "girl group" era of the early '60s was little more than a sort of Judy Garland renaissance, as Bette Midler has proven (lucratively) in recent months. As for the impresarios, can you imagine the noise when Phil Spector, a slight, mannered, and long haired teenager, came onto the scene in '59? Like most of those who'd follow, Spector squelched the rumors by marrying . . . in a typically grand Spector move, he married that most luscious of all the girl-group singers, Ronnie of the Ronnettes.

When equally effete British bands arrived, the curtain of rumor didn't lift (at least not for a long time) but the faucet of allegations was opened, full stream.

It has since been stated by the principals, in only slightly guarded language, that manager Brian Epstein's relationship with the Beatles transcended business on more than one occasion.

And the Rolling Stones, with their longest haired, pouty lipped leader, their snaggle-toothed skinny and their god-like Adonis, appeared in full-feathered, utterly magnificent drag on the cover of the "Have You Seen Your Mother Baby, Standing In The Shadow" single.

And the Who wrote a charming little ditty called "I'm A Boy," which ran something like:

*"I'm a boy, I'm a boy*
*But my ma won't admit*
*I'm a boy, I'm a boy*
*But if I say I am, I get it!"*

And there were others, of course, the P.J. Probys and the Ian Whitcombs, and others, and even Cliff Richards, who somehow never married. Icons, if not for real. But most of all there were the Kinks, whose leader, Raymond Douglas Davies, penned such fop epics as "A Well Respected Man," "Dedicated Follower of Fashion," and "Dandy" before (you should pardon the expression) going all the way with a 1970 hit called "Lola." Whose central message was sexual ambiguity, not to say confusion. Its final lines were: "I know what I am and I'm glad I'm a man / And so's Lola." Davies has since become one of the campiest performers in the history of show biz, let alone rock.

Davies had opened Pandora's Box, on both sides of the Atlantic. In America, the Velvet Underground had already sported an androgynous drummer named Maureen Tucker, who may be the only woman in rock ever to play a lesbian role. The Velvets had treaded on sexually thin ice in the S&M arena, but achieved lasting fame by producing Lou Reed, who became the first homosexual ever to marry a woman and do Frankenstein in drag in the same month.

Alice Cooper emerged, with the furor due an all-male band whose lead singer's name was Alice, later inspiring the immortal lines: "She asked me why the singer's name was Alice / I said: 'Listen, baby, you really wouldn't understand.'"

CREEM PHOTO ARCHIVE

A SHORT INTRODUCTION • AUGUST 1973

Quite clearly, as later events have shown, she would have.

Captain Beefheart's Magic Band at one time or another has had various members attired in frocks. Iggy and the famous Stooges have raised all kinds of previously sheltered myths, though whether sex or the butcher block was the issue is still open to question.

In Britain, things got further out, faster. The finely festooned Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band, had they survived a calamitous and stormy career, might now be considered co-equal progenitors of camp-rock with Davies. Roy Wood is said to be pictured, somewhere, in drag. Mick Jagger wrote "Cocksucker Blues"–in order to get out of a sticky publishing contract, true, but then, he *wrote* it.

And finally, the bitch queens of the movement: Marc Bolan and David Bowie, in order of appearance, David made his American debut clad in an assortment of pinafores, wowing them coast to coast, and with a band absolutely swarming with pretty young androgynes. Marc Bolan never hid his attraction to members of his own sex, either. Both have alluded to these matters–though never so explicitly as the hetero subjects–in their songs.

Closet doors on either side of the Atlantic fairly leapt open. (Either they'd been stacked two deep, or someone was keeping something else in their.) Before, sexual orientation had always been a guessing game–did he/she know why we responded to those pelvic thrusts? Was that genderless song written in such a way *on purpose?*–perhaps because of social forces, or maybe because the audience was still projecting. There are still plenty of people who find a lot of "gay" lyrics on such mid-sixties classics as *Highway 61* and, say, *Between the Buttons.*

Now, the halls of every record company are filled with glorious glitter and decked out camp followers. Strangely enough, almost every one of the current gay heroes has either married (Bolan, Bowie, Reed–the Big Three, after all) or has recanted (Alice, Mott the Hoople, whose "All the Young Dudes" practically became the national anthem of the newly gay last year). Who knows? Every record company has a glitter attraction, whether or not they call it that. Jerry Wexler of Atlantic calls it Jewel Box Rock. Others have termed it everything from glam rock to scuzz rock. Even staid Asylum, hardly a bastion of musical radicalism, has David Crosby, the man who wrote "Triad" for the Jefferson Airplane and was dismissed from the Byrds for *you know what.* ("Erk, erk," as Crosby once put it.)

So, it's back to the beginning, even now. Will the real homosexuals please stand up?

## THE ANDROGYNY HALL OF FAME

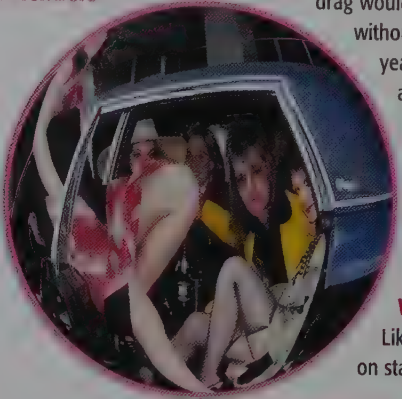
*(including all the gay blades, some who are not, others who don't know, and more still who helped just by asking the right questions at the right time)*

**Lou Reed:** Almost singlehandedly created the deca-rock of the Seventies, both musically and thematically. The Velvet Underground was his brainchild. What do you think "Lady Godiva's Operation" was about? Ironically victimized by his spawn on the eve of his belated stardom. Came out of the closet, then proceeded to get married. Sad sagging genius.

**Rod Stewart:** Rod's appeal cuts both ways. This may have something to do with his clothing, which, though cut in the usual Anglo-pop fashion, runs heavily to colors we don't usually associate with hard-rockers like Mr. Stewart–thrilling pinks and flaming reds rule the closet of this exquisitely costumed crooner. There is also the matter of the notorious Stewart haircut, which has less in common with "Little Red Rooster" than is at first apparent; not to mention Rod & the Faces' propensity to throw parties which become legendary. Despite it all the fable says, Rod's a football player (soccer star to you) at heart.

So round, so firm, so fully packed

**Sylvester:** Lots of people don't like Sylvester's music much, but even they can't deny that Sylvester is an authentic, and an original in a field which has mostly produced charlatans and impostors. His fondness for appearing in colossal drag wouldn't be so unusual were it not that Sylvester is six four, black and looks like Muhammad Ali without eyebrows. And unlike almost anyone but Wayne County, Sylvester's been doing drag for years. Not to mention the fact that, also unlike almost anyone else mentioned here, Sylvester actually makes it with boys, and never denies it. He may not do for gays what Helen Reddy's done for women (write an anthem), but it's nice to find an oasis of honesty in a field crowded with shuck and jive.



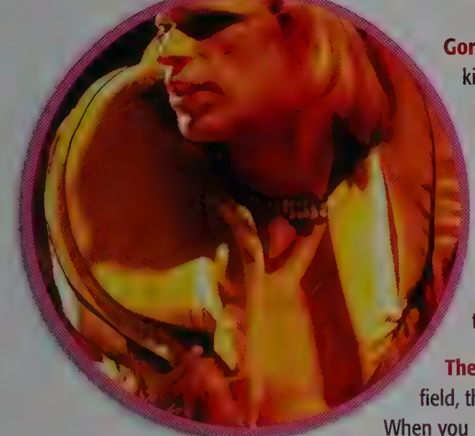
Rodney Bingenheimer with soon to be legal tenders

**Allan Sues:** With his limp-wristed sports casting character on *Laugh-In*, pioneered in bringing questionable sexuality to network prime time. Whether he is or not is irrelevant; his Peter Pan Peanut Butter commercials are the essence of innuendo-laden soft-core porn.

**Wayne County:** Drag-rock as theatre-rock as American catharsis. Ace song: "It Takes A Man Like Me To Find A Woman Like Me." Ace props: dick-pistol, double dildo lariat. Big mistake: shits on stage.

**Rodney's English Disco:** A Mattel Max's west. Determinedly decadent. Star girls and Bowie boys. Average age of patrons: in the vicinity of 16. Has breathed some Seventies life into the Sunset Strip.

**Sweet:** British Leather Boys, with sweet-tooth jams for all ages. "Little Willie," their first hit here, was awful, but the rest are lots better. Very pretty, in a sort of Hitler Youth sense, and you all know why Hitler was supposed to have kept those boys around.



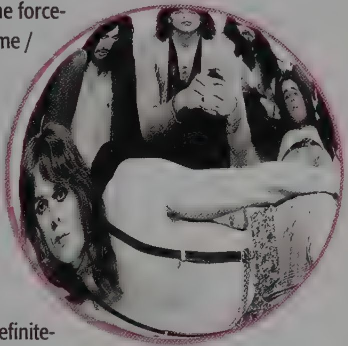
Roxy Music's bubbly bubbly Eno

**Gorgeous George:** Doubling as clinical psychiatrist and pro wrestler, he brought glam and a whole new kind of villain to wrestling back in the Fifties by creating a transvestite character that audiences could hate like they'd never hated before. Eventually run out of both careers and put in a straitjacket for his efforts.

**Sparks and Roxy Music:** Most advanced of the fey glamour bands. Sparks are American and do it by looking and sounding English. Roxy Music are English and do it by looking and sounding American.

**Silverhead:** Least advanced of the fey glamour bands. They do it by not knowing who or what they're trying to imitate.

**The Harlots of 42nd Street:** A Dolls rip-off, already. If their lead singer wasn't an acne forcefield, they'd be a great parody of a parody. One great line: "Fame is the name of the game / When you mix pleasure with pain."



How much wood can a Silverhead hold?

**The GTO's:** Could've been Girls Together Only, or maybe Girls Together Outrageously. Whatever, their gypsy garb and wacky groupoid exploits made them the perfect "sociological phenomena" for Zappa's confusion mill. "All the teenage girls now look the way the GTO's did five years ago."—Danny Fields.

**The Beatles:** Opened the door. Groomed meticulously for unisexual appeal by Brian Epstein. Paul was always too pretty; now he looks like a suburban closet. "But maybe that's only wishful thinking."—Angelo d'Arcangelo, *The Homosexual's Handbook* (Olympia Press).

**Bette Midler:** Despite lingering abilities about her ability to cope with stardom—and choose material—she is definitely the Queen of the Glitter Hop. Squares compare her to Garland and Streisand, and hip folks love her for her Shangri-Las, Crystals, and Chiffons remakes. The gay crowd (hip and square) love her because she came out of the Baths, because she shares their affection for camp and kitsch, and because, above all else, they found her first. She proved that every time you thought they were singing about love, they were actually singing about sex.

**Little Richard:** The Queen Bitch. Beauty above all else. If parents had understood what he was screaming about, we'd never have heard him on the radio. But the kids understood. His bouffant hairdo and jewelry were—and still are—the essence of it all.

**The Wackers:** As the first mainstream American rock 'n' roll band into makeup, a fairly accurate barometer of the acceptability of deca-rock's accoutrements.

**David Bowie:** Space-age acrophobia (Ziggy Stardust can't be dragged onto a plane) that is but one of many contradictions in his persona. In the right place at the right time, with all the right lines. Wore dresses on his American promo tour in '70. Seems to see himself as the Garbo of Rock. "There's a taste in my mouth and it's no taste at all."

**William Burroughs:** Original faggot junkie. Was in many ways the father of both Lou Reed's dark street life and Bowie's electronic sexuality.

**Gary Glitter:** The first Anglo-anal cash-in. With his fascination for Bette Davis staircases, makeup and truly puerile noises and lyrics, he cuts a shallow swath across the abdomen of rock.

**Andy Warhol:** Half the glitter crowd at any given concert today are really pretending they're in a Warhol flick. Almost singlehandedly took the assumptions out of sex and gender in the Sixties. In many ways the *eminence blanc* of the whole thing.

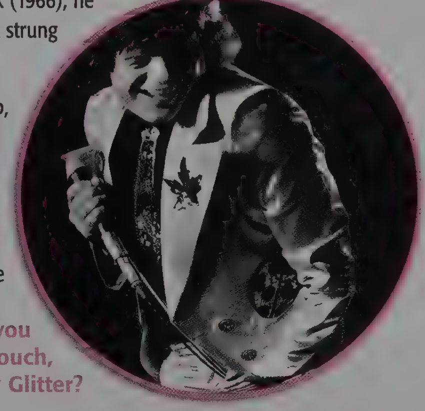
Little GTOs— You're really looking fine

**Dennis Wilson:** Prototype for the sun-tanned, surfside Southern California mystique which dominated the early-mid Sixties image of masculinity. The Seventies equivalent may be Andy Paley of the Sidewinders, who exudes a distinctively East Coast prep school arrogance and sexual charm.

**Bob Dylan:** Well, yea, people talked, and endlessly interpreted. Appeared on the cover of *Highway 61 Revisited* wearing rouge, which outraged his colorless folkie following. "You see somebody naked, and you say who is that man." In pix taken at his peak (1966), he looked on the verge of death, with the androgynous fascination of a strung out Puerto Rican hooker.

**P.J. Proby:** A surreal, androgynous parody of Elvis. England ate it up, all of it: the swagger, the lies, the queued hair, even the ultra-sweat vocalizing The authorities didn't like his pants splitting every time he walked on stage, though, and that iced it.

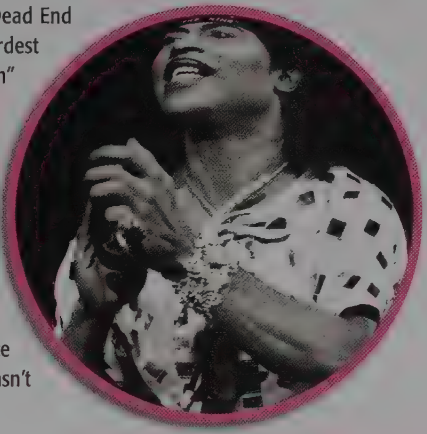
**Max's Kansas City:** For a long time *the* New York decadive. Andy Warhol. The Velvet Underground. The Back Room. When Andy left, so did much of the excitement. Like many of its regulars, is a has-been now, but may someday be a national shrine.



Do you wanna touch, Gary Glitter?

ENO: G. HANEKROOT; BOWIE, IGGY, LOU: MICK ROCK; BINGENHEIMER: R. BIXBY; SILVERHEAD, THE GTOs & GARY GLITTER: CREEM PHOTO ARCHIVE

**New York Dolls:** Sleazy, slurred, and consummately sexy. A pack of ex-actors, ex-clothes designers, ex-dope dealers and itinerant musicians whose stomping ground is the same as the Dead End Kids, they might be the best American group in a long while. Certainly the freshest, hardest troupe to appear from the Anglo-anal scene. Great songs—"Personality Crisis," "Babylon" (about a Long Island drag queen), "Trash"—which sum it up, and music with the power to back it up.



Tutti Fruitti—need we say more?

**Ray Davies:** Poked fun at the fops with "Dedicated Follower Of Fashion," but now finds himself as the busdriver for their magical uncertainty tour. Better at old-Hollywood glamour than Bowie, because he plays it as a cartoon. Substance with style. "I know what I am / I'm glad I'm a man / And so's Lola." Brought the question to American airwaves when nobody was thinking too much about such things.

**Frank Zappa:** The original rock neuter (unless you count Pat Boone). Contributed Alice Cooper, Captain Beefheart, and the GTOs to the cause. But only gave at the office. Sex wasn't freaky enough.

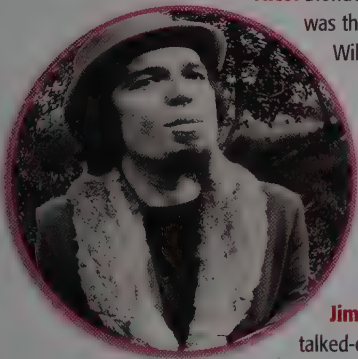
**Iggy Pop:** Only true madman in rock today. Driven past the edge. Perhaps post-sexual. Self-demolition apotheosis. Genius aflame. Menacing to man, woman and child alike. Catch him while you can.

**Alice Cooper:** Crypto shocker. A tease. Exploitation? Sure! First to blatantly feature drag in the context of a rock & roll show. Made sexual confusion a household pastime. Still more threatening to parents than Bowie. Nice guy. "I've never made it with a guy, but that doesn't mean I won't."—Alice to *Newsweek* reporter. The pimp for rock's new generation of degenerates, but with a P.T. Barnumesque concern for entertainment and self-gratification.

**The Rolling Stones:** Beatles fans called 'em queers in 1964. Appeared on the "Have You Seen Your Mother, Baby" single sleeve in good-natured drag. Can be both grittier than Reed and more outrageous than Bowie. Better at being gross while retaining class than anybody. "Mick has a certain bisexual charm."—Kenneth Anger. "Take your pick."—*The Homosexual's Handbook.*

**Elvis:** Despite Ed Sullivan's camera chicanery, his fabled pelvis centralized sex in the white rock & roll consciousness. Like Brando, a girlish tinge to his butch strut in the early days. Now, in his Sun King outfit, the David Bowie to Tom Jones' Jim Bailey.

Capt. Beefheart aspires to become Rear Admiral



**Nico:** Blonde, beautiful, and distant. So distant, in fact, that *any* notion of her sexuality involved fantasy. But the power was there: ask Dylan, Morrison, Iggy, or Jackson Browne. With Brian Jones (the Antonioni mutation of Dennis Wilson) at Monterey Pop, *the* androgyny couple of the late Sixties.

**Donovan:** Limp-wrist pioneer. Made it perfectly all right to be flakey. May have been the one our parents thought of when they associated flower-power with sexual deviation. Marriage ended speculation. Still in space.

**Jerry Lee Lewis:** Busted for robbing the cradle. Never apologized. It was his cousin and a girl, but in the Fifties if you committed one perversion, you committed 'em all. His long golden curls didn't help much, either.

**Jim Morrison:** Erotic politics. Lizard King. Things that go bump in the night. Tragic talked-out macho darling, like Brando and Elvis all over again but wasted too soon. Along with Jagger, *everybody's* favorite sexual fantasy.

You'd think Rod would have enough of silly soccer balls

**Joan Baez:** Finally owned up to one bisexual affair. What took you so long, Joannie?

**Johnnie Ray:** Cried a lot. Busted a lot. Walking apology.

**Marc Bolan:** Has been the No. 1 financial benefactor of the English glitter movement. Talks in vague terms about "Greek concepts of homosexuality." Love-hate feud with Bowie. His feline, almost dainty brand of sexual raunch seemed perfectly programmed for the European teenage consciousness, but his status in the States is uncertain at best.

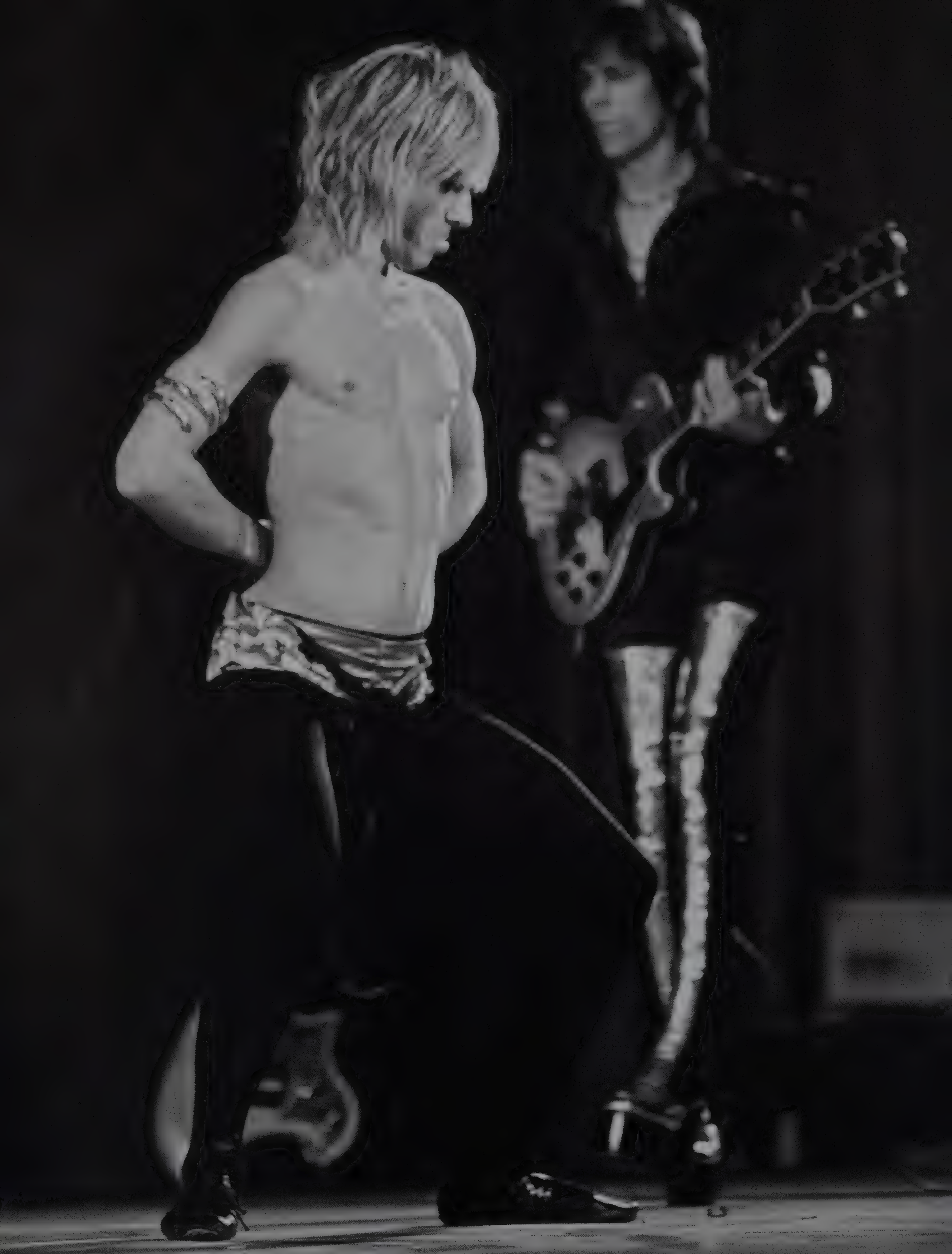
**Kim Fowley:** What's *he* doing here? Well, you'll always find Kim where the action is.

**The Cockettes:** San Francisco's contribution to the glitter apocalypse. Proudly homosexual, but talent was always suspect. Their music, films and theatrical shenanigans were loved on the Coast, but New York gave them the cold shoulder. Still, they did give us Sylvester.

Everything that glitters is old

**Captain Beefheart:** Dressed the Magic Band up in Goodwill frocks and lipstick back in '68. Now calls glam-rockers "those little guys with the swelling pencils." ■

JAGGER: CHARLIE AURINGER; LITTLE RICHARD: CAPTAIN BEEFHEART & ROD STEWART: CREEM PHOTO ARCHIVE



# Iggy&theStooges

## TAKE AMERICA BY THE SPLEEN

BY ESTHER & LESTER • APRIL 1974 • PHOTO BY ROBERT MATHEU

**The Stooges are back, and I'm happy, and I'm sad. Happy because they're such a great, great band, a distillation of beautiful fury that could tear your head off. Sad, because I'm sitting in a scumpit called the Michigan Palace waiting through three dogshit bands for them to come on. It's not just that the environment's ugly, but that I've been sitting in essentially this same place for five years now, counting a couple years layoff, waiting for them to break over the edge they always seem to be pushing toward and make it really big.**

**I have what Iggy calls "optimistic fatalism," because I believe in the Stooges. I've seen Iggy race into an audience and tear out its entrails and make them love it, I've seen this band pick up all the negative energy in the universe and turn it transcendent and human, like "Death Trip":**

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### HONEY COME AND BE MY ENEMY I CAN LOVE YOU TOO

One of those rare bands with a vision, the Stooges never fail to reach their audience one way or another. The Stooges are all about *participation*, and the reason Iggy dives into the audience and wreaks havoc is the same as the reason why, way back when the band was first cutting their chops in their house in Ann Arbor, he used to drag every kid he could find in off the street. Especially all the little girls that came to see them. There would be musical instruments of every type strewn all over the floor, and Pop would steer the visitor straight to the nearest one whether he or she'd ever had a note of schooling or not: "There, go on, you can play it, good, now you're a member of the band too!"

See? It was magic, and so is the polished insult they're parlaying today, except now every member of that audience, loving it or trying to summon the courage to leave, is a member of the band. And that's one of the finest gifts I've ever heard of any rocker giving his fans.

### GROWING UP WITH THE STOOGES, PART ONE: SUICIDE

But good intentions ain't enough. The Stooges have moved in fits and starts all their lives, and the present myth takes off with the fatal crash of the Early Original Stooges, who were founded in Ann Arbor back in 1968 about two weeks after they all started trying to learn their instruments for the first time, and a year or so before the release of their first album. Which sums up a big part of their message: *you can do it*. Start from less than nothing and snap the world in two? But that was another story about another band, although the personnel's pretty much the same. After two albums and cult success they broke up in a welter of legal, chemical and personality problems. Suffice that Jim Osterberg, a.k.a. Iggy Stooge, a.k.a. The Mighty Pop, thought that James Williamson (a.k.a. The Skull) was the greatest guitarist he had ever heard, and there were clashes with lead guitarist Ron Asheton. James *was* a better guitarist than Ron. But in spite of that and in spite of what James calls that period of "general apathy," there was a feeling, a cohesion, a mystical sense of family to the Stooges that died hard. Ron's brother Scott (a.k.a. Rock Action) was the *perfect* drummer for this band in terms of attitude, and even though bassists seemed to come and go there was even at the nadir of dissolution a feeling that out of this shambles some dark phoenix-like entity might yet rise. "The disintegration of the Stooges at that point," says Iggy today, "was also at least in my mind a refection of the germinal growth of what I wanted to do with James. Because we knew that we could do something better. But I was involved in kicking a very vicious junk habit, and James and I saw very little of each other for a long time. But I finally got back into working hard, going out and trying to hustle up a gig. Finally I went to New York City with no money, no prospects, sleepin' in the streets, rough and tumble, really out of your mind, no body, yet still somehow an active and aggressive man. Y'know what I mean? I was sleeping with friends, then I was sleeping in Elektra's offices [the band's old label]. I had a friend there who gave me a key, so I'd sneak in and hide in the executive washroom, then come out after hours. There was usually something around, I'd have a big bottle of champagne to take with me when I'd leave in the morning . . . so I ate too . . . I'd order out for big dinners and charge it to Elektra's tab . . . they had a Watts line and I'd sit up all night making long distance calls to all over the world . . . and I'd finally crash on the floor, get up about ten, and of course nobody important ever comes in on time, and I'd leave."

### DAVID CASSIDY JOINS THE STOOGES

"I had a lot of friends who bent over backwards to keep me going. But finally one day I was over at Danny Fields', and just about ready to give up. I wasn't able to get up anything concrete, there'd been offers to turn me into David Cassidy and like that: 'If you're willing to change this particular song . . . ' etc. Got an offer from Elektra, another one from Steve Paul about joining a band with Rick Derringer: "You will be allowed to write the words. Everything else will be strictly . . . ' I felt like a puppet even listening to shit like that, so I wasn't buying any of it."

### JIMMY STEWART vs. DAVID BOWIE

"So anyway I was sitting around Danny Fields' one night watching *Mr. Smith Goes To Washington*, and I was deep into it when Danny calls from Max's. Says, 'You remember this guy David Bowie?' A year ago in Melody Maker he'd listed me as his favorite singer or something. So Danny says, 'Grab a cab down to Max's, he wants to meet you.' So I said okay, but I couldn't tear myself away from the movie, cause Jimmy Stewart was *so sincere*. Fields kept calling me, saying "Listen, man, do yourself a favor.'

> *Lester was the shit. He really, really was. Lester wanted to think about, "What does this mean?" It got pretty convoluted, but he always managed to keep it as something a little more serious than a mind game. I keep his book* Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung *right up there with Andy Warhol, The Marquis DeSade, James Brown and Edward Gibbon—that's my little Literary Hall of Fame. He's in there.*
>
> *—Iggy Pop*

Cause Fields was kinda like my second mind. So finally after about a hundred calls I made it down there, just as they were about to close. It was ridiculous, here's all these people with money and everything, all waiting for the little scumbag that's got nothin'. [AND WALKING AROUND NEW YORK CITY IN HIS PAJAMAS. —ED.] So I finally stroll in, y'know, and there's Bowie and Tony DeFries [captain of the Mainman industry] and a couple of the company freaks, So I hit it off with David and Tony . . . "NOT LIKE THE OTHER TIME LATER IN LONDON WHEN BOWIE SHOWED UP FOR A PRESS CONFERENCE DRUNK AND TRIED TO DISPLAY THE PLAY OF POWER OF HIS NEW EMPIRE TO THE WORLD BY GRABBING THE MIGHTY POP FOR A SLOPPY KISS, WHICH WAS MET WITH A FIST STRAIGHT IN THE FACE.

" . . . They said "Are you hungry?" and I said 'Uh-*huh!* I hadn't eaten in about four days, so they took me out and I ordered two dinners. This was the exact time that I wanted to approach Tony about managing me, so we talked about it, and I signed my soul. He talked me into it, and we were gonna go to London pretty soon and put something together. So I called James in Detroit and said, 'Well, I think we've got something going.'"

IGGY ALWAYS WANTED TO BE THE DARLING OF THE BACK ROOM AT MAX'S WHATEVER HE SAYS, BUT THE ONLY OTHER GOOD IGGY AT MAX'S STORY ASIDE FROM THE HISTORIC BROKEN GLASS WALLOW WAS UTTER FACT THAT IN SELFSAME RECENT ENGAGEMENT THE STOOGES LOST ALL THEIR MONEY FOR THE WHOLE GIG BECAUSE EVERY NIGHT ONE MEMBER OF THE BAND WOULD SIGN THE TAB FOR THE WHOLE BACK ROOM, DRINKS AND DINNER. TALK ABOUT GLADHANDLING, WHAT POLITICIANS!

## STUCK IN CHELSEA WITH THE A-SQUARE BLUES AGAIN

"But when we got over to London they started to slide us into this big superstar trip, ridin' in a limousine just to go to the drugstore and all that, and I said 'We don't want any of this shit, this ain't where we're at . . .' Then he sent us back to Detroit for a few months. Nothing was accomplished."

Clive Davis' Last Prefrontal Hemorrhage

"But Iggy had gone to New York," interjects James, "up to CBS to get the contract."

**Mitey Pop:** "What happened is DeFries was in New York at that time and gave me a hundred bucks, said 'Here, go out and buy yourself something presentable and see that you show up tomorrow afternoon at 2:30 in Clive Davis' office.' So I threw together what I could, went up there and walked out fifteen minutes later with a six-figure contract. I sang 'The Shadow of Your Smile' for him, and did a little soft . . . And totally, just whatever he asked, he asked me if I'd do this or that or the other things, I'd say no.

"'Will you do Simon and Garfunkel?' 'No, I won't.'

'Will you be more melodic?' 'No, I won't.'

'Will you do what anybody asks you to?' 'No, I won't . . . but I can sing, ya wanna hear it?' And I sang that, and he said, 'Okay, enough, enough!' And just picked up the phone and said, 'Yeah. Call the legal department.' And that was it."

"See how easy it is to get a piece of the continent? All you gotta do is Bojangle and tip your hat."

## DOWN & OUT IN LONDON ON $800 A DAY

**Williamson:** "There was a couple of days in New York then when we weren't sure they were gonna allow us into England. We hadda wait, because they couldn't believe us because we weren't tourists. We were coming into the country, not as total bums but . . . not a penny in our pocket, but we'd just signed a several hundred thousand dollars contract. And so we got into London and we were put into the Royal Garden Hotel for a day for a tremendous amount of money."

"In the bridal suite!" laughs Iggy. "We were embarrassed—there was this hidden bed in the wall, but we couldn't find it, so we thought we had to sleep in the same bed. So we slept together for like a week before we realized it . . . we're straight guys [laughs], so it was weird for us, sleeping in this pink bed with ruffled sheets."

I'll bet Bowie and all them cats loved that.

"They weren't even up there at this point; we were in a strange country and we didn't know anybody . . ."

"We started growing as people too, y'know, James'd try and get me outa the house a little bit and I wouldn't be goin' for it . . . "

LIVING QUARTERS FOR POP & WILLIAMSON IN LONDON: FOUR STORY HOUSE IN CHELSEA, BEAUTIFUL DIGS @ $600 A MONTH PAID FOR BY COLUMBIA W. MACROBIOTIC MAID.

But even as new surroundings tightened them up as a personal song unit, the historically endemic blandness of the whole British trip, combined with frictions sarcastically yassuhbossing in and out of the Mainman hives, pushed the Stooges off acculturation back into the O-mind. "We were learning how their scheme at Mainman was run. And we were looking for musicians, trying to get something together. And the more we got to know England, the more we felt that there wasn't anybody over there we wanted to play with. Because we knew what we wanted, but like Mick Ronson was trying to get involved with us, and different people were trying to put their finger in it, and we were just really disappointed with the whole thing."

## ROCK ACTION SAVES THE DAY

"So we said, what the fuck, man, we know a good drummer that we can depend on, and we called Scott and Ron and they wanted to come over. Of course everybody at Mainman slowed it up, but we finally got 'em over there, started writing, Pop and I were turning out all kinds of material . . . "

**Iggy Pop:** "We wrote a hundred tunes before we got ready to cut *Raw Power*, and then we wrote half the album in the studio."

ALL DUE ADMIRATION FOR THEIR PROLIFICACY ASIDE—and I would've given all my teeth just to have that beast be a double album—IT STILL MUST BE NOTED THAT THE ACCREDITATION OF ALL COMPOSITIONS TO THE TEAM OF "POPWILLIAMSON" ON THE BACK OF THE RECORD IS NO MORE STRICTLY TRUE THAN "MIXED BY DAVID BOWIE." ALL STOOGE MATERIAL HAS ALWAYS BEEN CREATED BY THE COOPERATIVE EFFORTS OF THE ENTIRE BAND. THESE AIN'T HAROLD ARLEN SONGS, F'R CHRISSAKE, IT TAKES FOUR TURBINES TO MAKE THIS CHURN, AND THIS SORT OF THING IS ALMOST ENOUGH TO MAKE THE DISPASSIONATE OBSERVER (WHO AFTER ALL GOTTA SHIV SOME SKEPTICISM TO THIS LEGEND SOMEWHERE) WONDER WHETHER THE SOCIAL STRATIFICATION OF THE STOOGE UTOPIA MIGHT NOT BREAK DOWN TO THE SAME OLD FEUDAL ARRANGEMENT OF MASTER-STOOGES AND STOOGE-STOOGES. IN ANY CASE, FINAL ANSWER WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL ANY OF THEM HAVE ANY MONEY.

**James Williamson:** "So we started doing some live gigs over there and the reviews were really good, everybody loved us. We practiced from eleven to four every night, and we were *tight* . . . but suddenly we were stopped for *mysterious reasons*."

**L.B.:** "Did you go through *all those quaaludes*?"

RICHARD CREAMER

**Pop.:** "Yeah . . . aww, shit, I didn't know you, uh . . . "

**Williamson:** "See, we didn't realize until after it was all over what was going down, how much there was to it . . . but WE WERE GETTING TAKEN FOR A RIDE, MAN."

**Pop:** "We sure were. In the sense of not being allowed to buy a $200 car, forced to ride limousines, stuff like that. And it was our money we spent, right? I didn't go anyplace because I was kept like this: [TIES HIMSELF UP IN HIS OWN ARMS] I was kept on a chain. We started recording this album, at enormous costs before we ever went into the studio. Like just for writing, James and I would go into a four track or eight track and spend ten hours in there just workin' on writin' tunes."

ZEKE Z. ONLY KNOWS HOW MANY GREAT TITLES WERE LOST, BUT AMONG THOSE FROM THIS PERIOD: "FRESH RAG." LYRICS: "I CAN SMELL YOU WALKIN' DOWN THE STREET WITH YOUR FRESH RAG ON." SUNG AS THE WIFE OF A COLUMBIA PRODUCER HAPPNEED TO BE PASSING IN THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE AND TOOK IT, UH, PERSONALLY.

**Williamson:** "So finally after months of this we had an album. And DeFries was trying to persuade us to stay over there, just to keep us out of the way. But everybody in the band and back home was pushing to come back to America. So we came back with the tapes first, and the tapes were such a mess. We were under pressure, we were already so late on the album that we just handed the tapes to Bowie and said, 'Here, David,' and David waited five months to go in and mix IN THREE AND A HALF DAYS an album that was so fuckin' complicated—"

**Pop:** "Half the time the good parts were mixed out by that fuckin' carrottop . . . sabotaged. I think he tried to bury parts so you'd hear them faintly, rather than a straight mix . . . He did a good job on 'Search and Destroy.'"

"I was in there with Bowie when he was mixing that thing," cuts in James heatedly, "and the tracks were really complicated because this was our first shot at production. But even though he understood what this meant, he was sayin', 'Well, listen, this is the track that goes here,' just trying to rearrange all kinds of shit, man."

**Iguano:** "And I at that point had been cowed by the whole thing, I was at a weak point personally, and didn't have the personal strength and confidence to fight back, so I decided not to."

Well, it's a sad story, but ain't exactly new either. And just like Frank Zappa could probably tell you just about as many sad stories about Captain Beefheart and vice versa, so Bowie could undoubtedly marshall sufficient proof that these guys did nothing but come in and spend up ransoms in studio time while Mainman was coddling their "genius," only to slap out this piece of dogshit so dense you couldn't seep treacle through it. Bowie's pretty much a MOR straight-shooter, really, a secret swinger when all is said and done. His albums all sound like they were produced and mixed by somebody who served his apprenticeship assembling ships in bottles with elongated Q-tips, so it'd hardly be surprising if he really *couldn' t* hear the monolith of the age. On the other hand, he's noted for eliminating the competition by buying them up, and his earlier quoted comments on the Stooges album, like his statements about Lou Reed, reveal how essential it must be to keep the delicate condescension-masking-contempt (masking jealousy/fear? naw, maybe that's getting too melodramatic for anybody but the disgruntled musicians involved) operative while tending to all the little deviant (sub) cultures under his wing. Wilhelm Stekel once pointed out that many philanthropist are secret sadists. And anyway, since David's really such a nice fellow as he is, it's elegance and diplomacy itself to love all your erstwhile playmates and leave the dirty work of spine-scuttling and powerjockeying to the upgiht drones of Mainman.

**Williamson:** "They pulled a lot of power tricks on us after that, too. They made us use the album cover and the name the way they wanted it."

**Pop:** "I didn't see the album till it was in the stores, and when I saw that

CREEM

"IGGY" on there like that [LOOKING LIKE AN AMATEURISH TAKEOFF OF FIFTIES B-MONSTERFLIX POSTER LETTERING . . . DRIPPING MUNG.—Ed.] I flipped right out. I could have screamed. That cover was just the shits. Elektra's were better. Tony DeFries purposely did that out of context. They couldn't find a way to tie it up, and they blamed it on us. They said, 'Your guys weren't available for taking pictures,' which was untrue. [IG AIN'T LYIN' HERE.—ED.] Lee Childers was out there, taking pictures up the asshole. From the time we got to London till we got back here, all we ever really accomplished out of the whole thing was just some good music. We grew in our music. I can say that if I were to die tomorrow, I've come farther than I would have ever dreamed with my music before we made that album. I just hope more people can hear what's there than the number I suspect can."

### MAINMAN DON'T NEED NO DOCTOR: TONY DEFRIES DEATH-WRESTLES THE SKULL

**James:** "So we came back and played Detroit."

Did they ever. March '73, triumphal return of the homeboys and greatest show many ever saw them do. Absolutely twitch-perfect, they sounded and *looked* slick as a whip, and the audience was frothing floodtides down the aisles. Short set, though, and when the Stooges didn't return for encore (on orders of DeFries, who wanted they should act like *stars*) the crowd perhaps not unaccountably snarled sideways into antipathy as furious and naked as the love in the air not five minutes before. A friend: "Well, nothing like snatching defeat from the jaws of victory." Luck of the Stooges?

**Williamson:** "It was our second gig in a year and a half. But the band was having a lot of the kind of problems you always do if you don't work. DeFries was pulling a lot of numbers and right after that he pulled his big one. He figured he'd put me out of the way, and that way he could control Iggy."

Maybe. Mainman's rigidly puritanical position on drugs of all sorts is well known, and the Stooges are not exactly reknowned for their temperance. Hall monitors at Mainman might issue citations to seccies and underwazoo flack hacks for toking in the john, but a man whose time and stature and assets were as valuable as Tony DeFreis' were could hardly be expected to shelter a band with a junkie lead guitarist. James ain't no schmecker in any more sense than anybody else in the band; they may not play the Gulf Stream blues, but they do like to party just like every other itinerant guitar clown. So maybe it was all just a good excuse for the grand (and last) play from Above.

**Pop:** "DeFries' leverage that he tried to use for that one was that he said if we didn't accede to his wishes he would use every trick in the book to see to it that I would never step out on a stage again at all. He promised court injunctions, that he would tie me up for the rest of my life . . . "

Why did he want James out of the band, though, aside from any possible disagreements over chemical table manners?

**The Skull:** "A lot of things were involved. A lot of things I was dissatisfied with in their fuckin' set-up.
Drugs were involved, even though it was only a minimal kind of thing. What it really was was just caviling. And it wouldn't even have gotten to that point if we'd been able to work. We'd been working all these little clubs in England, building up an audience, and DeFries kept saying, 'Naw, man, wait, you're too big, just wait and I'll give you the call when it's time.' Which was either a big mistake or a big lie. DeFries wanted Pop to be a star, and he didn't want a band, because he had been having trouble with Bowie's band too."

Sour grapes maybe, but with the ring of substantiality. Similar complaints were heard from Mott the Hoople, who were also on a more quietly reserved and less rancorous level involved in extricating themselves from the Bowie fiefdom at that same time. Maybe eliminating the competition by buying them up and then putting 'em on the shelf?

And anyway it all makes no difference now, because no contract is binding which tries to pin a spine as doublejointed as the Mighty Pop's. Who spake: "I'm the only one signed with Tony DeFries. But I wasn't gonna have any of that shit, either. I said, 'This is a band, buddy, and if you don't wanna have nothin' to do with the band then you better have nothin' to do with me.' We told him to kiss off and came out here."

### GROWING UP WITH THE STOOGES, PART TWO: ONE DAY LIKE A LION

Talking about survival, son. Mussolini: "Better to live one day like a lion than all your life cowering like a rodent" (approximate).

Which is the whole point and ultimate good omen on the Stooge story. Like Walking Tall: DON'T TREAD ON ME! The Stooges would as soon slit your navel to your septum as take any waxstax biz bozo's endless ration of horseshit. They've come up hard, went down broke and jonesed out once, and now they're fine. At least one member of this band is fully prepared to take care of business on the business end, and that's all you need to keep from getting bought up, diced and priced and sold down the rack. They are strong, with the rare strength to lunge head in and make the direst mistakes imaginable, then drive on from every horror and setback, and all of us are gonna lose if they don't connect with the world soon and get a claw on the reins this time.

They've changed management again since Mainman sank, and at this writing they don't have a record company. Vinyl shortage, general penury and paranoia in the music biz, so no more Columbia under the proud Stooges logo. But they'll be getting another deal, perhaps even before you read this, and we'll certainly be able to make next year sustain with what comes after Raw Power, however it can be picked from this band's constant surfeit of new material. Right now they're keeping in shape by tearing around the tour trestles, and every time you see them it seems they've added not one but several more new songs, bedrock universal ramalammas whose titles grab you by the throat and make you laugh from the spleen: "I Got Nothin'," "Rich Bitch," "Wet My Bed," "Head On The Curb," "Open Up & Bleed," "She-Creatures of the Hollywood Hills." And the addition of pianist Scott Thurston has given the sound a whole new bite.

The new scheme for Total Victory embodies, furthermore, the consistent awareness of where they've run wrong before. The rock 'n' roll business is such an infantile fantasy that you can hardly believe it when you run up on a musician who actually has the werewithal to be realistic (maybe it takes one failure to instill that). James Williamson of Iggy & the Stooges: "It's all finally working out like we've always planned; we've worked more in the last month than in the past two and a half years. We're doing it the hard way, and the right way. I'm not gonna say it's all on the up and up, because it's not. We've got a lot of problems right now: we have a reputation to live down, and we still make mistakes. But our following is getting stronger. If we can make a good solid album, we're all right. If we can't get record sales on this next album, then we're fucked. I think this material's gonna be a lot stronger, and our overall production sound's gonna be a LOT better. It's gonna be a very clean album, very commercial. We have had so much negative appeal for so many years that we're just gonna die unless we can stop that appeal. So we're gonna go on playing every gig we can, putting on a professional show, no one's gonna get hurt and nothing weird's gonna happen, but I can guarantee you that if you go you ain't never seen anything like us. Because we don't plan on making any more mistakes. In any direction." ■

*I remember I had a lot of trouble with the session. I almost didn't want to do it. The band was having a rough time at that time, and I was personally in my career. I think looking back on it, the photographer made a brilliant choice to do something. He had to portray, honestly, what was going on. I think breaking the record shows frustration, disappointment and violence. It shows a lot. There's something infantile about the shots too, which is interesting*

*—Iggy Pop*

# NEW YORK DOLLS

## GREATEST HITS VOLUME 1

BY BEN EDMONDS • OCTOBER 1973 • PHOTOS BY BOB GRUEN

**(They're not a fag band.—*Ed.*)**

**"Get the glitter out of your asses and play" barks Todd Rundgren, firmly strapped into his pilot's seat behind the board in Studio B of the Record Plant in New York City. Coming from that flaming multi-colored head such words are already suspect, but the group of individuals they are aimed at, known professionally as the New York Dolls, react with contemptuous laughter and offer suggestions that can't be recounted in a family publication. Rundgren and the Dolls, you see, share this private joke; a joke they're in the midst of making public. Written off by many as just another in the wearisome line of glitter pretenders, the New York Dolls are cooking up a bit of brass-knuckled astonishment for those people.**

**Singer David Johansen strolls over to the plate glass partition which separates the studio from the control room, and scotch-tapes an advertising flier he's just found to the window so that it faces the booth. "Too fast to live, too young to die," it reads, "LET IT ROCK!" He spins around the band launches full-throttle into "Trash," an electric explosion that seconds his gesture with a vengeance, and without which his action would've been empty and melodramatic. In that moment it becomes perfectly apparent that the New York Dolls—far from being an easy target for anybody's labels—are in the midst of creating a category that doesn't even have a name yet.**

*"Sneering, sporting women's clothes, shoes, makeup and hairdos, contending they add pizazz to their music, the recently emergent New York Dolls are classically offensive. Their raw, screaming music supports the obvious hostility of their stage image."—The* New York Sunday News, *May 13, 1973.*

The New York Dolls have been the most walked-out-on band in the history of show business, having handily bested the formidable scores racked up by (early) Alice Cooper and the Stooges. And while there are those who would have you interpret this to mean that the Dolls are one of the worst bands in history, it more realistically means that they are one of the most misunderstood.

That misunderstanding, strangely enough, came most often from high-level executives of the recording industry, who flocked to court the Dolls and then left in droves, each muttering his own paranoid damnation. "Too loud," said one, with his fingers in his ears. "Too amateurish," piped up another. "Aesthetically indefensible," sniffed still another. "Faggots," muttered the one from New Jersey. They were so blinded by their self-righteous sense of taste that they completely failed to take notice of what was going on around the Dolls, a frenzied activity that men such as themselves would ordinarily have immediately translated into hard dollars-and-cents. Well, you've just gotta figure that anything that can make those people that defensive is going to be pretty special.

One of the first things that made record executives uneasy about the New York Dolls was simply the way they looked, which consequently must make it very important. As with the first time you ever saw the Rolling Stones (and every major phenomenon, for that matter), the way the Dolls look establishes an instant identification, and is centrally tied to what they represent.

It might be easy to write off the makeup, platform heels and devastatingly flashy costumes as merely the accoutrements of the dubious trend toward limp-wristed rock, but this time there's something very different going on. Their punk swagger, "Kick 'em in the ass" attitude and the overpowering hardness of the music might seem better suited to skull-laced leathers and a Harley-Davidson, but this volatile marriage of primped flash and toughness is the source of their strength. Some will tell you that clothes are irrelevant to music, but then again the Dolls' music may very well be irrelevant to music; just one part of something much larger.

Even to an industry that has sucked millions of dollars out of hard rock in the last two years, the music of the Dolls is hard enough to be scary. It is delivered at an unnerving volume, and it's aggressiveness makes no apologies for whatever its technical limitations might be. "Some people think that we don't have any manners," snorted David Johansen, "they say that we're very crude and don't use our guitars in the traditional sense of the instrument. But we use those guitars to make sounds that mean something to us. We don't make sounds that would mean anything to a bunch of hillbillies."

What even many of their most loyal followers may not yet realize, but will when they've heard the album, is that the Dolls are a good—possibly

even great—rock 'n' roll band in the traditional sense. Johansen may not be working with a Cadillac for a voice, but his phrasing, punctuation and general vocal strut serve his ends just as well. The two guitarists, Johnny Thunders and Syl Sylvian, work out of a relationship that defies the old lead-rhythm standard. They work together, building knockdown chord figures and then trading blitz-fills like electric Siamese criminals. Arthur Kane's bass is simple and unshakable, the anchor for the guitar dynamics.

When original drummer Billy Murcia died the victim of a stupid accident during an abortive (and consequently curtailed) tour of England, he was replaced by another New Yorker named Jerry Nolan. Nolan, who had previously played with a group called Kicks (formed by Billy Squier, now with the Sidewinders) and Wayne County's Queen Elizabeth, has made a tremendous contribution to the Dolls' musical progress. He's a power drummer who might someday be quite favorably compared to Keith Moon, but brought with his power a finesse which has served to focus dramatically the potential impact of the band.

The New York Dolls are still far from being the most mature band in the world, but they have this absolute familiarity with their material which more than compensates. Their songs—already top-notch—are so much what they are that it's nearly impossible to distinguish what is music and what is simply the New York Dolls. And, delivered with their adrenelin energy and boundless enthusiasm, its hard not to get a bit caught up in it yourself. Everybody loves to dance.

To say that the Dolls had a tough time securing a recording contract is an epic understatement. Some maintain that the band is starting out with too big a push in back of them, but there have been few bands who've actually started out with as much against them. The record execs walked out almost to a man. Manager Marty Thau's price-tag of $250,000, which scared off a lot of them before they'd even seen the band, earned him accusations of brain damage and worse. The band's contempt for their prospective angels didn't help, either.

"When we came back from England," David recalled, "we just went right into this show, just to get ourselves back into it. But someone had invited down Ahmet Ertegun, Clive Davis, Joe Polydor and these other crazy people. Out of an audience of 500, there were maybe 20 real kids who were there to rock. The rest of 'em were record company people, and if you mess up . . . well, goodbye, and the trap door opens and you fall into the snake pit.

"So we came on stage, and all we could see were these balding old relics with their polished heads, snorting coke and thinking that they're so outasite. And I'm supposed to get a record contract out of these people? It's like I'm just a prostitute, right, but if I'm okay maybe they'll give me a Lincoln and make me a pimp. Ahmet Ertegun and Mick Taylor decided that we were the worst high school band they'd ever heard. Mick Taylor told us 'you guys got just six months to polish it up.' I told him to go screw."

One that kept coming back, however, was Paul Nelson. The head of Mercury A&R in New York, his campaign to get his label to sign the Dolls eventually took on the proportions of a crusade. He persisted long after the company had given him a flat "no," to the point where it looked like his own job might be on the line. But his persistence paid off, and Mercury, plagued by severe identity problems in the last few years, has made an investment in their own future that they probably don't even understand yet. The notion that the Dolls, a band that Mercury didn't even want, might have more to say about the label's future than Rod Stewart is somewhat funny. If it's proven to be true, however, it'll be even funnier to see all the other record company execs who turned up their noses suddenly hurrying to grab a piece of the action for themselves.

David Johansen is presiding over his favorite table in the back room of Max's Kansas City; beside him is his lady of the moment, the lovely and talented Cyrinda Foxe. "When you look back at every cultural music scene," he is saying, "there were always a couple of bands that came first—like the Beatles and Rolling Stones—and then there were a million bands that came along in their wake and had only a nominal success. That's the way I think it's going to be in New York. There'll be a couple of groups that hit pretty big, and a lot that'll hit pretty minor. The New

York Dolls are gonna be around for awhile." "You know it, honey," Cyrinda drawls in her alcohol Texas accent. And then burps.

In many respects, the pattern of the New York Dolls' fortunes follows very closely the story of the MC5. Both bands could call upon a strong sense of community to sustain them, both economically and spiritually. The MC5's community was founded on a loosely reactionary set of social circumstances which were interpreted as overtly political. The Dolls' community, though every bit as reactionary, defines itself on much more fundamental (and almost instinctive) terms.

Like the MC5's native Detroit, New York is not a very pleasant place in which to live. It's ugly 24 hours a day, and can be mean almost as often. These negative factors, however, are what make the Dolls possible. Their audience is created directly by the need to escape the ugliness around them, and that is the source of the urgency in both the Dolls' music and the response of their audience to it. Like the MC5 tried to tell us, "Shakin' Street" is still where all the kids meet.

The question exists as to whether something so totally tied to New York can possibly mean anything to somebody in Kansas; the kind of culture gap that cost the Kinks much of their American audience with "Waterloo Sunset." The answer is yes. In the first place, the Dolls' music talks to rock 'n' roll kids about things common to all of them; New York just makes those things more obvious and immediate. And the Dolls' music talks to rock 'n' roll kids about things common to all of them; New York just makes those things more obvious and immediate. And the Dolls, in turn, help New York transcend its ugliness and become again the city of myth and mystery it once was. Many observers contend that the Dolls define New York in the same way as the Velvet Underground, but the way in which the Dolls define New York is actually much closer to *West Side Story.* The difference is that between success and failure.

"The main reason that I did the Dolls album," reports the notorious Todd Rundgren, the man the Dolls picked to produce their first record, "was because it was a New York City Record. There was no reason to get David Bowie or some other weirdo to produce it; the only person who can logically produce a New York City record is someone who lives in New York. I live here, and I recognize all the things about New York that the Dolls recognize in their music. It doesn't necessarily mean that I testify to that stuff; it doesn't even mean that the Dolls' music testifies to that stuff. The only thing that it testifies to is that they're punks! But it doesn't say 'take drugs' or 'hump' or 'go to outer space.' It's more like scenario music."

With Rundgren's expert help, those "scenarios" were translated into one of the most dynamic and compelling debut albums of the last five years. Todd wisely kept his own personality in the background, and succeeded in capturing in cogent recorded form more of the Dolls' live energy and spirit than any of us dared hope for. It's the kind of album that should be able to convince those who've never heard that band, might even surprise the audience they now have, and will aim a well-deserved razzberry in the direction of their detractors. It almost seems too good to be true.

The sessions were often as frenzied as the music. People were constantly dancing in and out, jumping up and down, shouting their encouragement to the band on the other side of the plate glass window. And the Dolls were the Dolls every minute, talking and jiving and keeping it going as if they were at a table on a hot night at Max's; making the studio just one more stage and making it work. On the record it's impossible to miss: the Dolls are nothing but themselves.

In sorting out the mix, Todd momentarily cut off all the tracks but Johansen's, leaving his voice to carry the tune solo. It sounded nearly pitiful; all slurred and only sometimes in tune. But when the rest of the band suddenly reappeared, it was magic. It was magic because it was none of them, it is all of them or nothing.

In the other studio at the Record Plant was Livingston Taylor, adding some string parts to a forthcoming album. His string players—middle-aged session people saying things like "my kids will be thrilled when I tell them that I played on a session for James Taylor's brother!"—got very nervous when they had to wade through the sleazo mutation of humanity that littered the hallway outside the Dolls' studio. It's going to come as quite a shock when they discover, a few months from now, that their impressionable youngsters are far more excited by the information that they were right outside the studio where the New York Dolls were recording their album.

Perhaps the main reason that the Dolls have been so misunderstood is that they don't play to any existing audience; it's an audience that has yet to reveal itself. More than simply latching onto an audience, the next phenomenon will be that which creates its audience. The Dolls have very little choice: they either create that audience or they have none at all. They don't really belong to anything else.

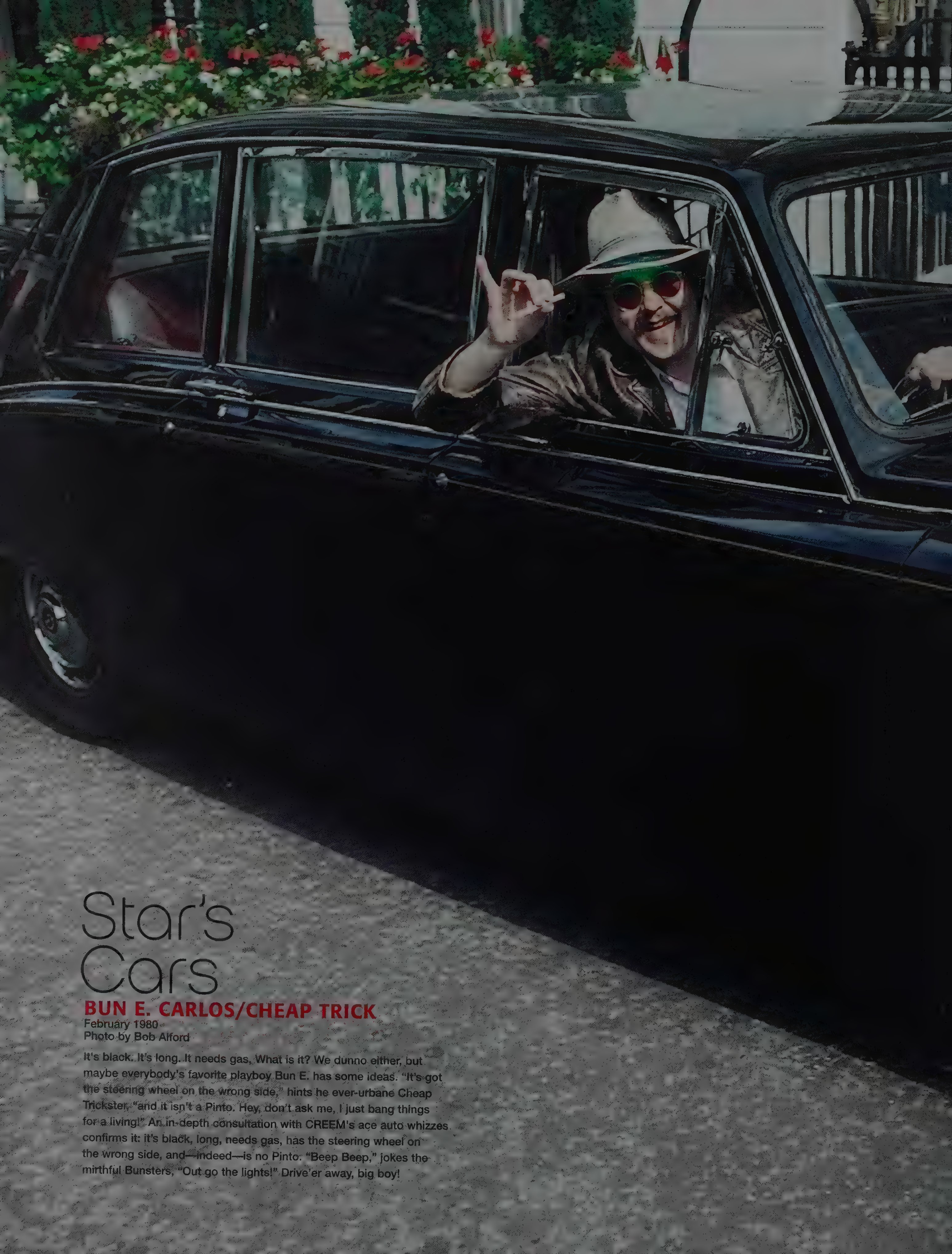
That audience has only just begun to open its eyes. A lot of them probably just started buying records recently, and if they buy Alice Cooper and Rolling Stones albums, they do so with contempt for the fact that they have to share them with their totally jive older brothers and sisters. They're the kids who want something of their own. I love the Dolls not only because they'll help make this enfranchisement possible, but because they have the power to make me feel a part of it as well.

"You'd have to like our shows even if you didn't like the music," David challenges. "I mean, all those crazy kids running around . . . " The boys in the band do their part, of course: David commanding the action with arrogant desperation, as if every show was to be his last; Johnny and Syl greasing every blitzkreig chord aggression with vicious body crossfire; while Jerry does his best to exterminate his drums with a maniacally disciplined assault. With the band pulling out all the stops and the audiences returning the favor, the only word that comes close to capturing the experience is acceleration. David Bowie wasn't too far off-target when he told the New York Dolls that they had the energy of six English bands.

What makes the Dolls so wonderfully different is that every bit of energy at their disposal is exhausted in reaching out to make that precious rock 'n' roll connection possible. And any band that believes in its audience enough to work that hard for them is just bound to see that energy reciprocated. They've only just begun to see if this magic applies to audiences outside their home turf, but they've got better tools for the job than anybody else presently in the running.

"Our audience really respects us," said Jerry Nolan in a voice that should've been coming from the front seat of a Manhattan taxicab. "One time, this friend of ours from Brazil—the guy spent three months with us, hanging out and videotaping—somebody ripped off all his equipment at the Mercer Arts Center. But just because it was a New York Dolls gig, by word of mouth, underground grapevine "no questions asked" kind of thing, all his equipment was returned. And all his film of us."

The audience that has been willingly seduced by the Dolls' misimage of decadent overdose will be terribly disappointed to discover that this band never signed a contract to star in their closet home-movies. "A lot of people thought that we were the band that was gonna camp on the Sixties for the old queens," spits David with a look of disgust., "but you can tell 'em that I said 'those used-up queens can all go screw!' "The rest of the band loudly voices their support of this motion: it's obvious that they embrace a common and unequivocal notion of where they're headed. And every time the New York Dolls are turned loose on a stage, they're one step closer to getting there. ■



# Star's Cars

## BUN E. CARLOS/CHEAP TRICK

February 1980
Photo by Bob Alford

It's black. It's long. It needs gas. What is it? We dunno either, but maybe everybody's favorite playboy Bun E. has some ideas. "It's got the steering wheel on the wrong side," hints he ever-urbane Cheap Trickster, "and it isn't a Pinto. Hey, don't ask me, I just bang things for a living!" An in-depth consultation with CREEM's ace auto whizzes confirms it: it's black, long, needs gas, has the steering wheel on the wrong side, and—indeed—is no Pinto. "Beep Beep," jokes the mirthful Bunsters, "Out go the lights!" Drive'er away, big boy!

CREEM

*Aaah, spring 1980. We were in London, doing overdubs for the All Shook Up record. Working with famed Beatles production team of George Martin and Geoff Emerick at Air Studios. Bob Alford took this shot at The Montcalm, where we stayed for a week. This photo says it all, snooty hotel, way overpriced room service, warm beer, cold food, rude staff. Otherwise, one of the more fun weeks of our career. George, now known as Sir George, and Geoff were great to work with. When the photo appeared in CREEM the car was unnamed. None of the Detroit gearheads at the mag could identify it! Alford didn't know, I didn't have a clue. We found out later it's a Bentley, I think . . .*

*—Bun E. Carlos*

*"The first time I ever heard of Patti Smith was in CREEM Magazine when they ran her poetry. Those pictures of her with the short Keith Richards hair and the cigarette—they completely made you stop in your tracks. What is that? It read so good and looked so good, it made me realize that that's what I wanted to do. I want to go to New York and see that. Fuck Emerson Lake and Palmer. CREEM really introduced that aesthetic more than anybody."*

*"When she wrote that article about the dead rock stars and they printed her hand drawing at the end that said this was her last article, I remember thinking 'Oh no, this is the end of an era here.' It was really disheartening."*

*—Thurston Moore*

**Jukebox Cruci-Fix**
**by Patti Smith**
**June 1975**

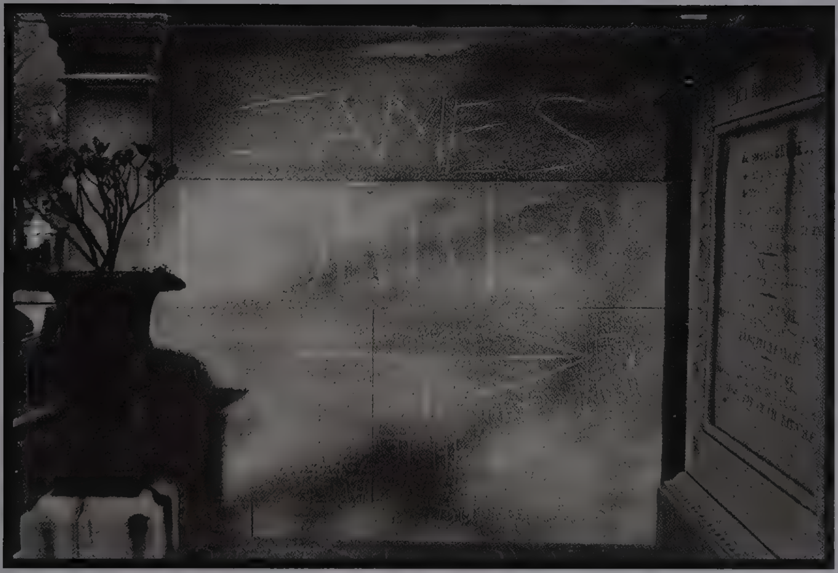
I was at this party but nothing was happening at al. a lot of chicks were leaning over a pale neon Wurlitzer jukebox. the way dead voice boxes rolled up it came on like a coffin. it was the kind of party to leave behind. 8 millimeter footage of Jimi Hendrix jacking his strat. girls sobbing and measuring the spaces between his fingers. I went out in the hallway and stood there drinking a glass of tea. "riders on the storm" was rolling from a local transistor. the boy slipped on some soap and the radio fell in the bathtub. I gulped my tea too fast and some of it went up my nose it made me choke and stammer and my lungs started pumping like erratic water wings . . .

I woke up and the room was gone the radio was playing "riders on the storm" and the dj cut in and said that Jim Morrison was dead. I reached over for my air rifle and took shaky aim. ducks with musical notes etched in their little wax skulls were revolving on the ceiling. Camus said that it's death which gives gambling and heroism their true meaning. but me I prefer another French saying—better live a scoundrel than a dead miracle. I kicked the shit outa the radio and went looking for a heavy handed game of chance. local bingo—fascination—or when the chips are down handle some poker . . .

Johnny Ace was cool he came east from texas to knock "just a dream" off the charts with "pledge my love." "dream" was tender but who could imagine humping it up to Jimmy Clanton? all the girls would oil their nylons when Johnny came to town. white girls. there were no black girls in the fifties. flashes of pony tail hair. girls with chiffon triangles tied tight around their hot soft throats. girls with flesh like wonderbread. and Johnny Ace sang for them. a hero with no R & B no Spanish blood no sweat. ballads tender as boston lettuce, more soft spots than a baby's head. until he pushed his own finger in. one Christmas eve the black velvet Sinatra was a little long backstage. Ace was playing solitaire. he took a 45 caliber outa his tux rolled the barrel like his own hit record and blew his brains out.

some say Vladmir Mayakovski was the first rock 'n' roll star. Russian poet adolescent anarchist handsome 22 years old rushing the streets howling blue face. a guy with huge piano teeth and a marshall amp installed in his chest. he was always crashing church meets bars parties pool halls. were there pool halls in Russia? who knows. but if there were he hit them all. he was the seven feet tall poet bully with the amazing megaphone mouth. did god know about revolution rhythm of the painful promise of a poem? well Mayakovski knew and thousands of kids rocked in Russian behind him.

until one morning while the crowds were waiting our hero was penning his last booming aria: "me and life are quits" he writ. and like our own Johnny Ace he held the wild card. he put on a



CREEM PHOTO ARCHIVE

clean shirt swaggered to the window maybe glanced in the mirror russia's Marlon Brando cocked the lever pulled the trigger and blew his heart out. Russian lit was in the red. the funeral was like after the pop festival. you know-those last shots of Monterey—no sound—minds blown. all the women wore black cloaks. Russia was a rainy nunnery. cause Mayakovski—a god unto himself to say nothing o fhis fans—had pulled the rug from his own life.

you take a chance when you put your stakes on somebody else. like a horse race it often pays but sooner or later you're gonna be left standing in the rain. genius is meant to peak and pull out or be wiped out permanently. we is a fickle lot. the champ ain't champ unless he keeps on winning. the minute some flash knocks him outa the ring or outa the charts he's thru. like pabst beer says "ya don't get the blue ribbon for being second."

see it's like this. first let me move outa metaphor. there was no poker game I'm lousy at cards. there was the dream though and I got splattered. we been creamed up the ass since Buddy Holly Kennedy. platinum porches miniature airplanes switchblades poisons Saturday night specials motorcycles hypodermic pills thrills old fords. ever see Jackson Pollock in motion. that bull ballet and dripping blue poles. premeditation was his action he didn't believe in accidents. his blood spattered like his own pain cause like most heroes he was a crazy driver. it's okay though it was the rules of an old game. and me I got to admit like the photographs. the twisted steel the outstretched hand the broken neck of a fender. the instant replay of Lee Harvey Oswalds getting dead live on television. they were the assassinating rhythms of our generation.

but rhythms like rules shift. something new is coming down and we got to be alert to feel it happening. something new and totally ecstatic. the politics of ecstasy move all around me. I refuse to believe Hendrix had the last possessed hand that Joplin had the last drunken throat that Morrison had the last enlightened mind. they didn't slip their skins and split forever for us to hibernate in posthumous jukeboxes. they are gone and we're still moving. I went to Jim Morrison's grave and there was nothing. a dirt site in section 6. I sat there like some jack ass sobbing in the mud all alone in paris when there is so much work to do so much flesh to consume. there is nothing there—no headstone no vibration no flowers no feeling. just a little plastic plaque with the word AMI friend the only thing Jim Morrison ever wanted.

I went to paris to exorcise some demons. some kind of dread I harbored of moving forward. I went with this poetic conceit that we would meet in some melody hovering over his grave. but there was nothing. it was kind of grief or madness. I remembered this dream I had. I came in a clearing and saw a man on a marble slab. it was Morrison and he was human. but his wings were merging with the marble. he was struggling to get free but like Prometheus freedom was beyond him.

I sat there for a couple hours. I was covering with mud and afraid to move. then it was all over. it just didn't matter anymore. racing thru my skull were new plans new dreams voyages symphonies colors. I just wanted to get the hell outa there and go home and do my own work. to focus my floodlight on the rhythm within. I straightened my skirt and said good-bye to him. an old woman in black spoke to me in broken English. look at this grave how sad! why do you Americans not honor your poets?

my mind moved before my mouth. I finished the dream. the stone dissolved and he flew away. I brushed the feathers off my raincoat and answered:

because we don't look back.

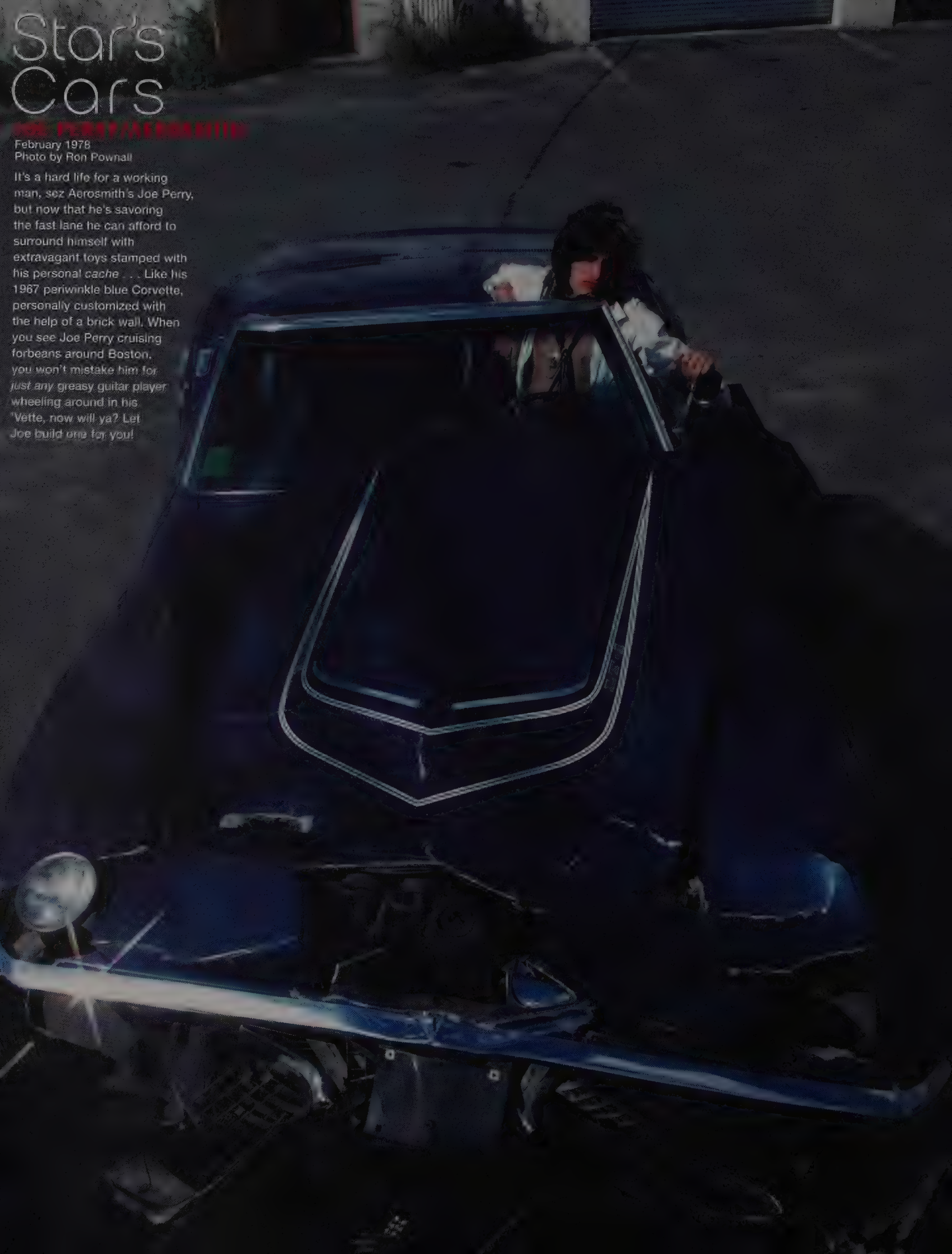
This is my
last article

# Star's Cars

## JOE PERRY/AEROSMITH

February 1978
Photo by Ron Pownall

It's a hard life for a working man, sez Aerosmith's Joe Perry, but now that he's savoring the fast lane he can afford to surround himself with extravagant toys stamped with his personal *cache* . . . Like his 1967 periwinkle blue Corvette, personally customized with the help of a brick wall. When you see Joe Perry cruising forbeans around Boston, you won't mistake him for *just any* greasy guitar player wheeling around in his 'Vette, now will ya? Let Joe build one for you!



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# ROD JUMPS TEAMS

## CAN HE CUT IT IN THE AMERICAN LEAGUE?

by Barbara Charone • November 1975

"Is he a movie star?" the newspaper photographer wondered out loud, pointing to an 8x10 glossy of Rod Stewart and Britt Eckland, casually positioned behind a scenic garden landscape, arms intertwined, eyes locked tightly together by adoring glances. "Oh well," he sighed, packing up his camera cases because Rod Stewart, the singer, did not want his picture taken. "I don't usually do this kind of work anyway."

It was easy to understand the photographer's confusion, for these days Rod Stewart is a changed man. Sitting in his Chicago hotel suite listening to a test pressing of his new album *Atlantic Crossing*, Rod seemed incredibly subdued. That cocky rock 'n' roll flamboyance was now replaced by an eerie smugness. Outrageous conceits no longer decorated his conversation while passionate conviction no longer held up his bold statements. The only time he raised his voice was to put the Faces down.

"You're talking to a new man now, " Rod proudly announced, apparently pleased with the changes. "The world is a lot bigger than Great Britain and the Faces. A lot bigger."

Reasons behind this revelation were twofold. Recording the album in America under the wings of producer Tom Dowd, aided by Muscle Shoals musicians, Stewart realized he no longer needed the usual well-known Faces he'd used on previous solo albums.

"I *thought* it was going to be strange making the album without Woody but it wasn't," Rod inhaled the next sentence quickly. "I must have had blinkers on these last five years. I must have been mad using the same musicians over and over again. I should have branched out a long time ago."

"All the fun has come back into recording for me at last. I've never liked going into the studio and now I can't wait to go back. I'd always used the Faces on my albums so for that reason I've wanted to keep the band together. But now I know I can stand on my own two feet. This is the first album made entirely in America. Ya know I don't live in England anymore." He grinned like a mischievous bad boy.

Encouraged by both Britt and the all-consuming 98 percent tax in Britain, Rod fled his native country opting for the life of a world traveler. Daily scandal sheets back home ran large headlines that proclaimed, "BRITT TAMES THE TARTAN TERROR." And Rod did indeed seem captive. It was hard to believe that in just a few weeks time, Stewart would be strutting the stage, leading the audiences through a "Maggie May" sing along, back on tour with the Faces.

"Britt is great," Rod enthused, humming a little love song as his true flame prepared herself for public exposure in the room next door. "She got me out of England, got me out of a rut. At the moment I like living out of a suitcase. Four countries in one day we did last week! You get into a rut in England with your house in the country, going to party after party. It's got noting to do with music. I never got bored with all of that. I just felt like, well it's not as if I'm paid to do this. I mean there was a nine-month period last year where I was becoming a jetsetter, a Casanova. It was a time for a change. All that stuff I was doing in England had nothing to do with my profession, with being a singer."

For the first time in their five-year history, Rod no longer raves about good time camaraderie between him and the Faces. These days he talks seriously of *if* the Faces stay together, complaining about the albums *he* has made with *them*. Perhaps part of Rod's metamorphosis has something to do with Ron Wood's recent show of strength with the Rolling Stones. Despite the fact that Rod often sang Woody's praises, he easily had the band under his thumb.

Yet Stewart's behavior had been curious throughout the summer. He never once saw his long time cohort perform with the band. "I'm not interested in seeing the Stones," Rod yawned. "Bad Company are my favorite rock band." Sticking close to Britt, Rod maintained an unusually low profile. The days when he used to brag, "Mick Jagger is a better showman than me but I can sing the pants off 'im," seem to be a thing of the past.

"Everyone's a little worried now with Woody being with the Stones and me working completely and utterly on my own," Stewart summarized, asserting his independence. "I don't know if things will work out with the Faces but I'm not worried about it." There was something behind this blasé posture that suggested he was. I would've been worried before I made this album, but not now. I've got a new lease on me confidence now."

The Faces have always depended on good time spontaneity onstage, acting out the part of enjoying a night out with the boys. Yet that infectious atmosphere now seems tainted with bitterness and bad feeling amongst a band once known for its congenial, alcoholic personality.

"This is the first time I've ever thought about going on the road without the Faces. I want to reproduce a lot of the music I've done over the last five years. And reproduce it accuraely. If it takes me six months of rehearsals it will be worth it. My goal in life is to play 'Mandolin Wind' onstage and make it sound like the record."

"I mean, the best tracks I've ever done are never played live," he complained, never saying we but always I. "I know I'm probably a bit negative but so I should be. I really don't know what's going to happen to us. And I don't know what shape Woody will be in after the Stones tour. We're not the easiest two bands to tour with. Fuck," Rod sighs in frustration, "is he still alive? I really don't know."

For the hundredth time in his career, Stewart once again insisted that he would never again record with the faces. This time he seemed serious.

"I must be honest,' Rod said, trying hard not to contradict himself. "I've got no intentions of making any more albums with the Faces. It's too much hard work. Some of the best tings I've ever done on their albums have never seen the light of day. I mean 'Silicone Grown,' that one I wrote about

*Despite my many glorious appearances on CREEM covers, including that fetching sailor suit I donned in 1927, the magazine has time and again proven that although the CREEM might sour, there is still no accounting for good taste.*

silicone tits. I was really proud of that cause it's a difficult subject to write about and it just got lost.

"There's no egos involved or money. I just want it to sound better. I just want to have a band that's like the Band, a musician's band. The ideal situation is Dylan and the Band. They've got their own identities. They don't often record together but they do tour together which is the ideal set-up.

"If it doesn't work out in rehearsal then we just won't our," Rod announced with authority, seemingly unconcerned with what anybody else thought. "If it doesn't sound like I want it to sound that's it. I want it to sound like something now, like the record I've made. You've got to be a lot more disciplined. We've got to tighten up.

"We always looked at touring like it was party time which it should be but it's time we proved ourselves. It's time we took the blinkers off. I can understand why Mac Kenny and Tets are still wearing blinkers living in England, it's like being closed off in a room."

Stewart himself was beginning to feel claustrophobic within the Faces organization, confined to the group.

If the Faces broke up, he would simply organize those Muscle Shoals musicians, get the old MGs—Steve Cropper, Al Jackson and Duck Dunn—back on the road. After playing on his record, they want to play onstage. "Besides," Rod says, "they drink as much as the Faces anyways."

"I'll tell ya what," Rod Stewart, the singer, volunteered, getting ready to stroll the beaches. "If we do bust up there's gonna be no bloody farewell tour. It'll end up in a punch up. We'll have the fight televised," he laughs, genuinely amused, "and *that* will be our farewell tour, kicking the shit out of each other." ■

# FACES HUDDLE FOR DEFENSIVE PLAY

## IT'S LAST BASH ON THE GRIDIRON

by Lester Bangs • November 1975

Thus it was that, armed with my own reservations and a transcript of Barbara Charone's interview with Rod, I went up to yet another blandly plush hotel room to call on the Faces. Or at least Ron Wood and Ian MacLagan, the two more voluble cornerstones of this organization. Here in 1975, the time of the bland-out, rock 'n' roll was at a dreary pass, and the Faces seemed to be suffering by it no less than everybody else. I'd talked to them on their last Stateside tour, in February, and despite their show of good cheer, they'd seemed pretty down at that time if you peered through the wisecracks. The oddity was that in spite of their questionable corporate status the band was playing better than ever. Now things had, on the surface at least, taken an even darker turn: Wood had been loaned out to the Stones for their summer tour, and amid myriad rumors of permanent defection; meanwhile Rod had sought professional help in Muscle Shoals (Steve Cropper, Al Jackson, etc. ) for the recording of his latest solo album, and realized it accompanied by a fusillade of personal and professional insults aimed at his longtime cohorts, whom he seemed ready to write off as punchup drinking buddies and nothing more.

I asked them if the Faces, as presently constituted, had a future.

"Future?" said Mac, feigning surprise. "It's ripe, it's rich." He looked me in the eye, speaking slowly and leaving measured spaces between his sentences for emphasis. "It's not over, mate, the band ain't split up." A beat. "That's a fact."

I told them what Rod had said in the interview, and Wood leaned forward with a smirk on his face. "Now Lester, come on, you know that's a pure shit story, scraping the barrel to a terrible degree . . . just because what Rod says is true, and ... May change the next day."

He was still smiling. I had never conducted an interview I a room whose atmosphere was dead in quite the way this was. And I have been in some flat places. I told them Rod had called them sloppy musicians.

"Yeah, that hurt," said Mac. "We asked him about that and he said he didn't say it. We read it in an interview it may have been something that's going across his mind and it's just been blown up. I think the whole thing was really because Rod wasn't in contact with us for such a long time—he was surrounded by Hollywood and all that. Rod shouldn't have said those things because if the band's gonna split up, surely the band should know about it. If Rod's gonna leave the band, then Rod's gonna leave the band . . . we wouldn't necessarily know about it . . . "

Confused, I asked him if he thought it beyond Rod to simply walk out.

"I don't know, I class these latest remarks exactly as when he passed all those comments on *Ooh La La*. Remember?" The bitterness beneath the deliberate vagueness began to assert itself. "We were all very proud of what we'd done, and then he came out and slayed it . . . At the time we were fuckin' happy, because we'd spent a lot of time on it and finally it was finished.

Wood jumped in and set about cover up the wounds MacLagan had begun to open. "When 'e came home, he hadn't seen us in so long and his imagination was starting to get the better of him." I said that I thought his latest move was symptomatic of white singers (Janis Joplin, for instance) who want to "legitimize" themselves and that the Faces were the compliment to Rod's singing. "Yeah," said Mac. "it's a necessary bit of roughage . . ."

. . . The band may be working so hard for a change because they know that this is the last round before final dissolution. Or perhaps they are out to show Rod, by force if necessary, that they can cut anybody at his riffs; perhaps they will all shove each other into renewed love and inspired interaction. Nah, you know they hate his guts. But the Faces party never seemed so close to exploding into gridiron carnage before. If you made this one, you were lucky. It won't come again. ■

# CREEM'S PROFILES
(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")

MICHAEL N. MARKS

# GRACE SLICK

**HOME:** Frisco hippie mansion, the corner bar.

**AGE:** Still kicking.

**PROFESSION:** Ensuring that the sputtering hull of the Jefferson Airplane will never take itself too seriously again.

**HOBBIES:** Getting lushed up and Nazi-baiting Paul Kantner. Tai Kwan Doing his wacker.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *Mea Culpa* by Ralph J. Gleason (City Lights).

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Exposing herself to old men on crosstown busses.

**QUOTE:** "In other words, I'll jerk off."

**PROFILE:** This brazen hussy is more fun than a barrel of Maria Muldaurs, and kicks ass thrice as effectively as Ti-Grace Atkinson. A true Peaches Browning in a world of Woolworth Amazons. She is hot, she's a wingding, and she will most certainly survive the declinging institution that she still flaps to some semblance of glory.

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

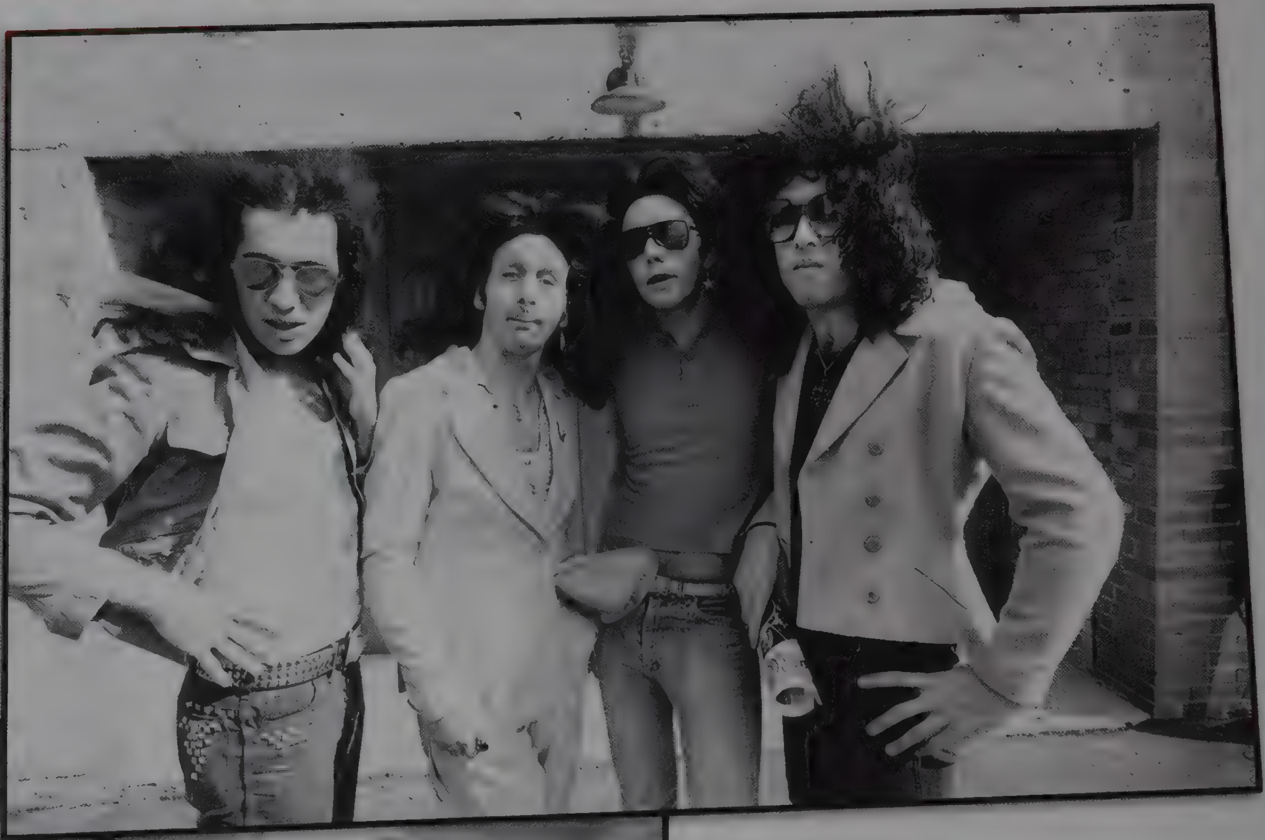
BOY HOWDY!
CREEM

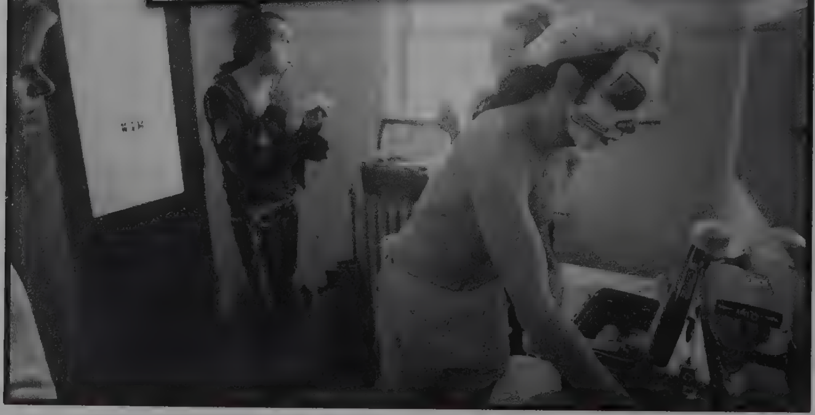
**Authentic** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

BOY HOWDY! ™

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**

# creem exclusive exposé





### AT LAST! KISS WITHOUT THEIR MAKEUP ON! OR: IF WE DON'T CARE, WHY SHOULD YOU?

Long ago, when Kiss were mere nobodies looking for that first big break, guess who strolled up to the CREEM World Headquarters and actually *put on* their makeup? Seen here in the world-famous CREEM's Men's Room, the Geeks That Sold The World are clearly *unmasked* and ready for the greasepaint. And the fact that said makeup also disguised four of the ugliest mugs in The Biz should have told us something, but hey, we were too busy laughing to notice. Eventually these Kissaroos went on to Big Bucks and Kiddieland, but—for a while at least, these were the most carefully hidden kissers in the world. Now, of course Kiss' Peter Criss has gone solo, done the unthinkable and *shown it all*—but CREEM, as always, refuse to be scooped! And so, for your dining and retching pleasure, here's Kiss *without* their makeup! Write "WHO CARES" on you doggie-bag but remember this: Some things are better left unknown. These faces are four of them.

**PHOTOS BY CHARLIE AURINGER**

**KISS**
**DESTROYER**
CASABLANCA

Damn Ezrin anyway. It's bad enough that he's had the nerve to put his kids on the last three albums that he's produced, but where does he come off adding piano, a choir, bells and chimes, strings and a full blown orchestra on a *Kiss* album? Simmons' bass is mixed down to nothing, and although the drums *do* pound out heavy, the guitars are strictly of sterilized "Welcome To My Nightmare" caliber. Not only that, but how come Bob always manages to end up co-writing all the songs on every album he produces? Sure, the first two tracks are the greatest thing Kiss have ever done, but that's still not enough to compensate to stop me from walking around the corner, knocking on his door, and punching Ezrin on the nose on behalf of Kiss fans everywhere. Better move, Bob, y'hear?

*—Jeffrey Morgan*
*June 1976*

## KISS & MAKE-UP

I would like to make a formal apology to Jeffrey Morgan for having offended his sensibilities with the *Destroyer* album by Kiss. As a matter of fact, I was hoping against hope that, after all of my unforgivable performances in the past, I might finally win his approval with this last effort. It means a great deal to those of us who strain, unappreciated and invisible, backstage in the great amphitheatre that is SHOWBIZ, to be loved and respected by the vanguard of the Rock 'n' Roll press. Our little hearts cry out for love and acceptance from all the Jeffrey Morgans of this world. After all Jeff, without you guys, who are we? Anyways, I've enrolled in Law School and have sworn a sacred oath never to set foot in a Rock 'n' Roll studio again. (I may do the odd MOR date—you know write chart or even co-write a few pop tunes—but just to keep my chops up.)

Jeffrey, I'm really sorry. Really I am. And . . . I won't do it again—I promise.

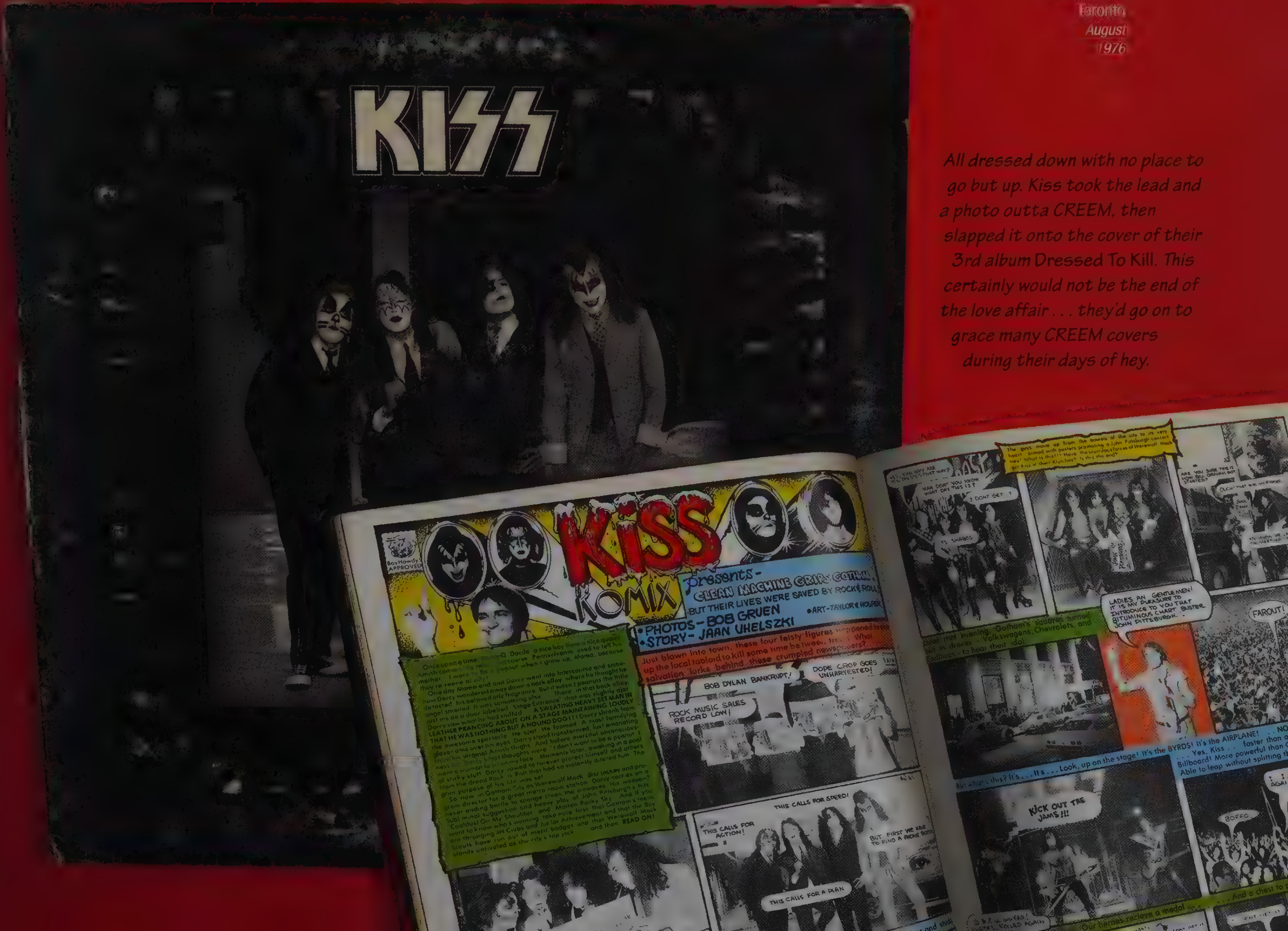
As to the suggestion that Jeffrey might like to drop by for a visit sometime: I formally invite him and any three of his friends to join us at our Tae Kwon-Do class any day of the week just to say hi to all the guys up here.

Honest, we'd love to see you, Jeff. Hear?

Love,
Bob Ezrin
*Toronto*
*August*
*1976*

"Each review I've seen so far has grudgingly acknowledged the impressive visceral thrills of Kiss' riffing (they wield the *true* stun guitars of r 'n' r), while at the same time withholding that kiss of rockliterary approval. The only substantive complaint I've been able to identify in all this approach-avoidance toward Kiss is that *kids like them*! Uh-huh. I thought Grand Funk cured us of such condescension forever."

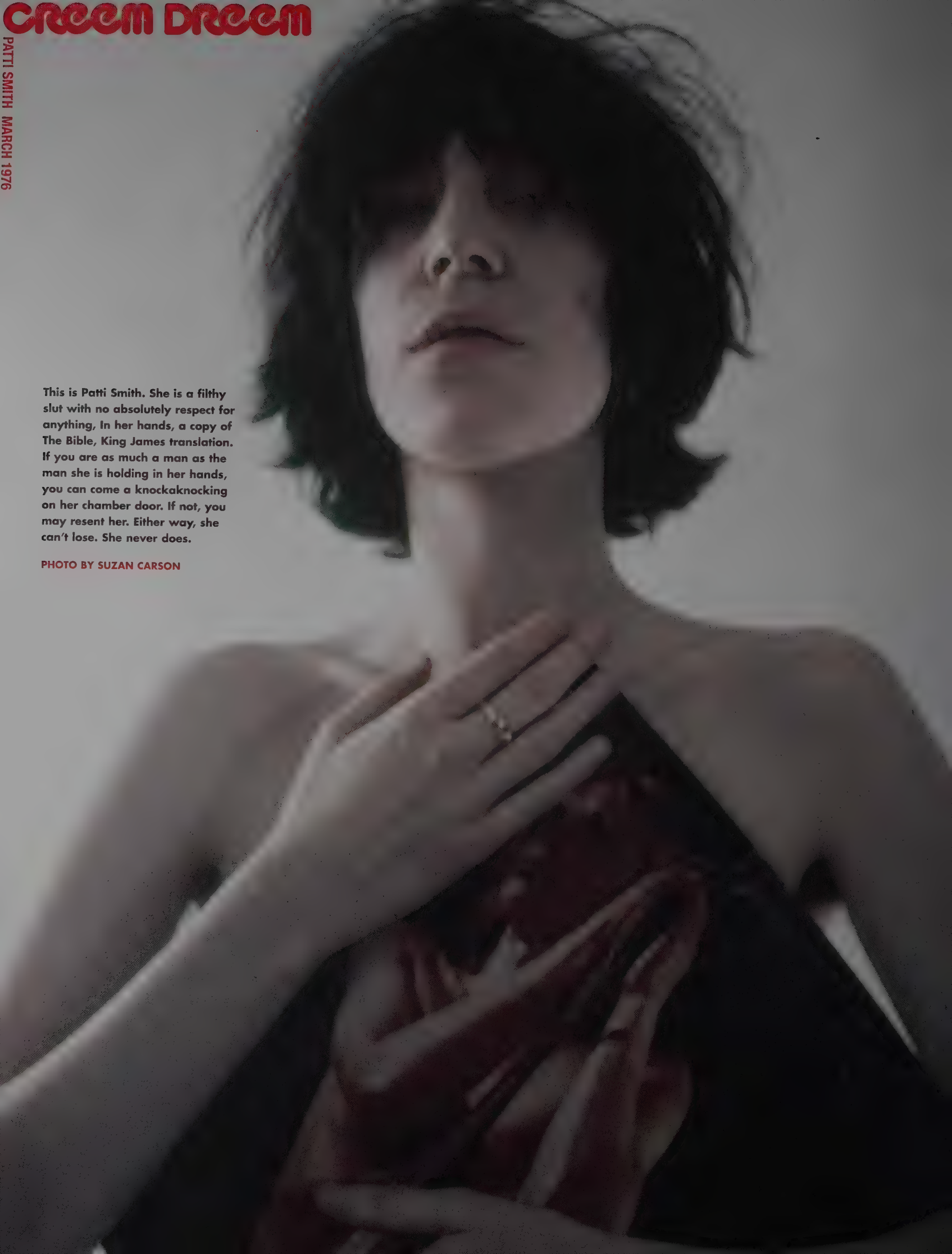
*—Richard Riegel*
*July 1975*


KISS
KISS KOMIX
presents - CLEAN MACHINE GRIPS GOTHAM
BUT THEIR LIVES WERE SAVED BY ROCK'N'ROLL
PHOTOS - BOB GRUEN
STORY - JAAN UHELSZKI
BOB DYLAN BANKRUPT!
DOPE CROP GOES UNHARVESTED!
ROCK MUSIC SALES RECORD LOW!
THIS CALLS FOR SPEED!
THIS CALLS FOR ACTION!
THIS CALLS FOR A PLAN
KICK OUT THE JAMS!!!
LADIES AN' GENTLEMEN! IT IS MY PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE TO YOU THAT BITUMINOUS CHART BUSTER, JOHN PITTSBURGH.
FAROUT!
BOFFO

*All dressed down with no place to go but up. Kiss took the lead and a photo outta CREEM, then slapped it onto the cover of their 3rd album Dressed To Kill. This certainly would not be the end of the love affair . . . they'd go on to grace many CREEM covers during their days of hey.*

# CREEM DREEM

PATTI SMITH MARCH 1976



This is Patti Smith. She is a filthy slut with no absolutely respect for anything, In her hands, a copy of The Bible, King James translation. If you are as much a man as the man she is holding in her hands, you can come a knockaknocking on her chamber door. If not, you may resent her. Either way, she can't lose. She never does.

PHOTO BY SUZAN CARSON

# BACKSTAGE

## WHERE THE STARS TANK UP & LET THEIR IMAGES DOWN

That'll teach Debbie to say the magic word.

It was so dark Bob had to use Chrissie's flash.

"Of course that's Ric Ocasek! You think I don't know my own husband?"

CHARLIE AURINGER (BOTH)

Singer-on-writer violence is never funny, but there are two good reasons to run these photos.

ALL PHOTOS CREEM PHOTO ARCHIVE EXCEPT WHERE INDICATED

Some were unclear on the chin touching concept.

One sip of Boy Howdy! beer and Lene was tighter than her braids.

# Jaggernaut Wild Horse On A Plastic Phallus

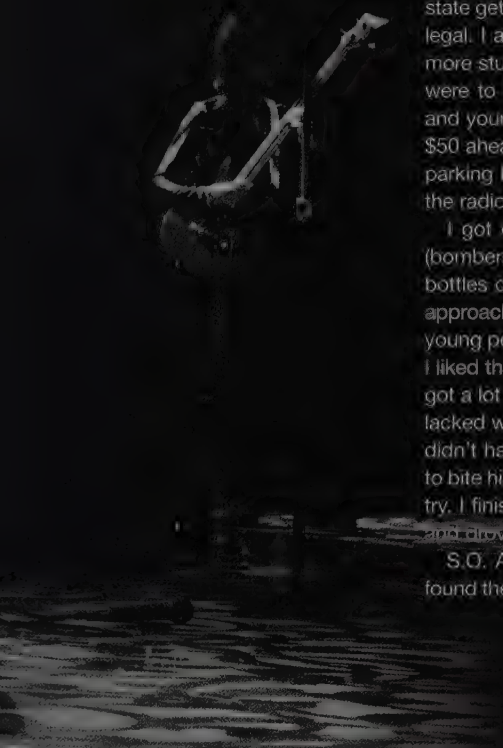
BY CHARLES BUKOWSKI • OCTOBER 1975

PHOTO BY NEIL ZLOZOWER

They opened on the 9th at the Forum and I went to the track the same day. The track is right across from the Forum and I looked over as I drove in and thought, well, that's where it's going to be. Last time I had seen them was at the Santa Monica Civic. It was hot at the track and everybody was sweating and losing. I was hungover but got off well. A track is some place to go so you won't stare at the walls and whack-off, or swallow ant poison. You walk around and bet and wait and look at the people and when you look at the people long enough you begin to realize that it's bad because they are everywhere, but it's bearable because you adjust somewhat, feeling more like another piece of meat in the tide than if you had stayed home and read Ezra, or Tom Wolfe or the financial section.

The tracks aren't what they used to be: full of hollering drunks and cigar smokers, and girls sitting at the side Benches and showing leg all the way up to the panties. I think times are much harder than the government tells us. The government owes their balls to the banks and the banks have over-lent to businessmen who can't pay it back because the people can't buy what business sells because an egg costs a dollar and they've only got 50 cents. The whole thing can go overnight and you'll find red flags in the smokestacks and Mao t-shirts walking through Disneyland, or maybe Christ will come back wheeling a golden bike, front wheel 12-to-one ratio to rear. Anyhow, the people are desperate at the track; it has become the job, the survival, the cross . . . instead of the lucky lark. And unless you know exactly what you're doing at a racetrack, how to read and play a toteboard, re-evaluate the trackman's morning line and eliminate the sucker money from the good money, you aren't going to win, you aren't going to win but one time in ten trips to the track. People on their last funds, on their last unemployment check, on borrowed money, stolen money, desperate stinking diminishing money are getting dismantled forever out there, whole lifetimes pissed away, but the, state gets an almost 7 percent tax cut on each dollar, so it's legal. I am better than most out there because I have put more study into it. The racetrack to me is like the bullfights were to Hemingway—a place to study death and motion and your own character or lack of it. By the 9th race I was $50 ahead, put $40 to win on my horse and walked to the parking lot. Driving in I heard the result of the last race on the radio—my horse had come in 2nd.

I got on in, took a hot bath, had a joint, had 2 joints (bombers), drank some white wine, Blue Nun, had 7 or 8 bottles of Heineken and wondered about the best way to approach a subject that was holy to a lot of people, the still young people anyhow. I liked the rock beat; I still liked sex; I liked the raising high roll and roar and reach of rock, yet I got a lot more out of Bee, and Mahler and Ives. What rock lacked was the total layers of melody and chance that just didn't have to chase itself after it began, like a dog trying to bite his ass off because he'd eaten hot peppers. Well, I'd try. I finished off the Blue Nun, dressed, had another joint and drove back on out. I was going to be late.



S.O. And the parking lot was full. I circled around and found the closest street to park in—at least a half mile away.

I got out and began to walk. Manchester. The street was full of private residents behind iron bars with guards. And funeral homes. Others were walking in. But not too many. It was late. I walked along thinking, shit, it's too far, I ought to turn back. But I kept walking. About halfway down Manchester (on the south side) I found a golf course that had a bar and I walked in. There were tables. And golfers, satisfied golfers drinking slowly. There was a daylight golf course but these kitties had been shooting for distance on the straight range under the electric lights. Through the glass back of the bar you could still see a few others out there Jerking off golfballs under the moon. I had a girl with me. She ordered a bloody mary and I ordered a screwdriver. When my belly's going bad vodka soothes me and my belly's always going bad. The waitress asked the girl for her I.D. She was 24 and it pleased her. The bartender had a cheating, chalky dumb face and poured 2 thin drinks. Still it was cool and gentle in there.

"Look," I said, "why don't we just stay in here and get drunk? Fuck the STONES. I mean, I can make up some kind of story: went to see the STONES, got drunk in a golfcourse bar, pewked, broke a table . . . knitted a palm tree towel, caught cancer. Whatcha think?" ?"Sounds all right." ?When women agree with me I always do the other thing. I paid up and we left. It was still quite a walk. Then we were angling across the parking lot. Security cars drove up and down. Kids leaned against cars smoking joints and drinking cheap wine. Beer cans were about. Some whiskey bottles. The younger generation was no longer pro-dope and anti-alcohol—they had caught up with me: they used it all. When 27 nations would soon know how to use the hydrogen bomb it hardly made sense to preserve your health. The girl and I, our tickets were for seats that were separated. I got her pointed in the direction of her seat and then walked over to the bar. Prices were reasonable. I had two fast drinks, got my ticket stub out, put it in my hand and walked toward the noise. A large chap drunk on cheap wine ran toward me telling me that his wallet had been stolen. I lifted my elbow gently into his gut and he bent over and began to vomit.

I tried to find my section and my aisle. It was dark and light and blaring. The usher screamed something about where my seat was but I couldn't hear and waved him off. I sat down on the steps and lit a cigarette. Mick was down there in some kind of pajamas with little strings tied around his ankles. Ron Wood was the rhythm guitarist replacing Mick Taylor; Billy Preston was really shooting-off at the keyboard; Keith Richards was on lead guitar and he and Ron were doing some sub-glancing lilting highs against each other's edges but Keith held a firmer more natural ground, albeit an easy one which allowed Ron to come in and play back against shots and lobs at his will. Charlie Watts on tempo seemed to have joy but his center was off to the left and falling down. Bill Wyman on bass was the total professional holding it all together over the bloody Thames-Forum.

The piece ended and the usher told me that I was over on the other side, on the other side of row N. Another number began. I walked up and around. Every seat was taken.

I sat down next to row N and watched the Mick work. I sensed a gentility and grace and desperateness in him, and still some of the power: I shall lead you children the shit out of here.

Then a female with big legs came down and brushed her hip against my head. An usher. Grotch, grotch, double luck. I showed her my stub. She moved out the kid on the end seat. I felt guilty and sat down on it. A huge balloon cock rose from the center of the stage, it must have been 70 feet high. The rock rocked, the cock rocked.

This generation loves cocks. The next generation we're going to see huge pussies, guys jumping into them like swimming pools and coming out all red and blue and white and gold and gleaming about 6 miles north of Redondo Beach.

Anyhow, Mick grabbed this cock at the bottom (and the screams really upped) and then Mick began to bend that big cock toward the stage, and then he crawled along it (living that time) and he kept moving toward the head, and then he kept getting nearer and then he grabbed the head.

The response was symphonic and beyond.

The next bit began. The guy next to me started again. This guy rocked and bobbed and rocked and rolled and flickered and rotor-rooted and boggled no matter what was or wasn't. He knew and loved his music. An insect of the inner-beat. Each hit with him was the big hit. Selectivity was Non-comp with him. I always drew one of these.

I went to the bar for another drink and after getting this kid out of my $12.50 seat again, there was Mick, he'd put his foot in a stirrup and now he was holding to a rope and he was way out and swinging back and forth over the heads of his audience, and he didn't look too steady up there waving back and forth, I didn't know what he was on, but for the sake of his bisexual ass and the heads he was going to fall upon I was glad when they reeled him back in.

Mick wore down after that, decided to change pajamas and sent out Billy Preston who tried to cheese and steal the game from the Jag and almost did, he was fresh and full of armpit and job and jog, he wanted to bury and replace the hero, he was nice, he did an Irish jig painted over in black, I even liked him, but you knew he didn't have the final send-off, and you must have guessed that Mick knew it too as he buried wet ice under his armpits and ass and mind backstage. Mick came out and finished with Preston. They almost kissed, wiggling assholes. Somebody threw a brace of firecrackers into the crowd. They exploded just properly. One guy was blinded for life; one girl would have a cataract over the left eye forever; one guy would never hear out of one ear. OK, that's circus, it's cleaner than Vietnam.

Bouquets fly. One hits Mick in the face. Mick tries to stamp out a big ball balloon that lands on stage. He can't push his foot through it. One saddens. Mick runs over, jumps up, kicks one of his fiddlers in the ass. The fiddler smokes a smile back, gently, full of knowledge: like, the pay is good.

The stage weighs 40 elephants and is shaped like a star. Mick gets out on the edge of the star; he gets each bit of audience alone, that section alone, and then he takes the mike away from his face and he forms his lips into the silent sound: FUCK YOU. They respond.

The edge of the star rises. Mick loses his balance, rolls down to stage center, losing his mike.

There's more. I get the taste for the ending. Will it be "Sympathy For The Devil"? Will it be like at the Santa Monica Civic? Bodies pressing down the aisles and the young football players beating the shit out of the rock-tasters? To keep the sanctuary and the body and the soul of the Mick intact? I got trapped down there among ankles and cunt hairs and milk bodies and cotton-candy minds. I didn't want more of that. I got out. I got out when all the lights went on and the holy scene was about to begin and we were to love each other and the music and the Jag and the rock and the knowledge.

I left early. Outside they seemed bored. There were any number of titless blonde young girls in t-shirts and jeans. Their men were nowhere. They sat upon the ends of bumpers, most of the bumpers attached to campers. The titless young blonde things in t-shirts and jeans. They were listless, stoned, unexcited but not vicious. Little tight-butted girls with pussies and loves and flows.

So I walked on down to the car. The girl was in the back seat asleep. I got in and drove off. She awakened. I was going to have to send her back to New York City. We weren't making it. She sat up.

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"I left early. That shit is finally deadening," she said. "Well, the tickets were free." "You going to write about it?" "I don't know. I can't get any reaction, I can't get any reaction at all." "Let's get something to eat," she said. "Yeah, well, we can do that."

I drove north on Crenshaw looking for a nice place where you could get a drink and where there wasn't any music of any kind. It was OK if the waitress was crazy as long as she didn't whistle. ■

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## THE ROLLING STONES
## EXILE ON MAIN STREET
ROLLING STONES RECORDS

*I have nothing to say and I'm saying it.*
—Allen Ginsberg, "America."

That seems to sum up the Stones' position in their new album. The title and some of the songs suggest that they are trying to make some sort of statement about America, while some of the other lyrics attest to a new-found feeling of lassitude and uncertainty in the Stones. This is at once the worst studio album the Stones have ever made, and the most maddeningly inconsistent and strangely depressing release of their career. I have been listening to it night and day since it arrived, trying to get at what's wrong with it besides the inferior musical quality of some of the songs, because it *is* something deeper. And, even more, trying to find the strength in it that we've always depended on the Stones for. The first time I listened to it, I became utterly depressed. Then I started to like it the second playing. Then it began to seem like it was falling apart the more I listened to it. Then I began to like it again for no particular reason than that it did make noise. But the uneasy feeling has never quite left.

I detect a lack of feeling in much of even the most exciting music here, a detachment and sense of meaninglessness. Many of the songs don't seem to be *about* anything in particular. But what's worse is that they're not even meaningless in an aggressive way. On Led Zeppelin's last album they got away with things like "Ooh mama said the way you move, gon' make you sweat, gon' make you groove," because the music was so big and viscerally compelling that you were swept away in the rush and the album was a motherfucker even if it did seem to come from a certain cynical superstar detachment. But the Stones have had trouble feeling enough for so long that they just don't know what to tell us anymore, and are beginning to have serious questions about themselves. Which—even if it bodes well—makes this their *There's A Riot Goin' On* at best, at worst a sort of auteur classic.

It's a new music, perhaps. A lot of it can only be called downer music, and seems intentionally dense and detached. The lack of emotion on some of it is enough to make it a personal affront. *Sticky Fingers* had the emotion of its decadence, the loose, brassy self-destruction which so many of us got off on so vicariously. I was all set, before this came out, to write a piece about how art has a right to be amoral, and point to the Stones as the classic proof that it does. "Memo From Turner" and *Sticky Fingers* gave you kicks even if you weren't a degenerate, or rich enough to play at being a degeneracy-dilettante. They were the razzberry in the faces of our assumptions about racism, sex and sexism, drugs, maybe even life itself. We've already come to expect this from the Stones on safer topics. That they drew so much wrath with

*Sticky Fingers* was only indication of what direct hits they were making.

But *Exile On Main Street* doesn't give many kicks. It's just a mass of admittedly scalding gruel beaded with Stones clichés, from old R&B (sounding at times close even to bands like Canned Heat) to uptempo cookers that seldom quite get there and don't even have the strength or lunacy to be overdone. I expected it to be the Answer of the season, but it's not except insfar as this is the season for down music. Just compare "Tumbling Dice" to the directness and cohesion of "Let's Spend the Night Together" or Gimme Shelter" or "Brown Sugar"—in their terms it misses.

In terms of what's available on the radio circa spring-summer 1972, it's good enough to make Number One. The density, the comparatively draggy tempos, the buried vocal and the general sense of tiredness all indicate that this is the best possible right now from a band still possessed by genius but as tired as anybody or everybody else. Which is why it's a hit. You don't *feel* "Tumblin' Dice" like you feet "School Days" or "Paint It Black" or even "Iron Man." You let it play if it's on, you turn it up (always), tap your feet and nod your head; listen for the 98% of the words you still haven't caught, think about it being a new Stones single.

But no matter how often you hear it, you don't stomp and shout and slam your palms against the car-doors and ogle passers-by with a maniacal and half-artificial (but so what?) sense of power. Corny as it may seem, you don't find your life enriched much by either single or album. Though it smacks of the kind of how-much-do-you-expect that Dylan's *Self Portrait* occasioned, I expect more from the Rolling Stones, and I am damned pissed off that it isn't what I thought it would be, in sound, content, impact, you name it. I once cut work the next day to drive 500 miles to see them at Altamont, not only because I was a drunken fan, but because I knew I could count on them for magic, and I didn't even complain much when Altamont turned out like it did. For that alone, they owe me more than this.

On the other hand, everybody gets tired (or old—a possibility that must be rather chilling for a Rolling Stone). Tired music seems to be the order of the day. But this is *dense* cloudy tired music, and dense music should always be energized, even maniacal, so it rocks out from the fog to grab you by the lapels and shake you. Oh, they still know how to play fast, but the core is emotionally sterile, a vacuity that manifests itself in the most desultory type of music imaginable. It is especially strange for something that pretends (or tries) to be a party record at least part of the time. Well, one of my ploys for rationalizing it was taking it to a party. People were wondering if there was something wrong with the record player.

It's not even a matter of not believing Mick any more when he sings a line like "I need a love," or "heard the children crying," as much as that their cynicism no longer bears the same decadent glee. Like David Crosby's, it seems a depleted motion without any point whatsoever except to get a new album out. Which also makes this a different kind of failure from *Self Portrait*, because you and I know that Dylan *always* wanted to sing "Blue Moon" and Everly Brothers tunes, maybe even as wimpily as possible. Dylan bears a strong root love for everything stereotyped as Middle America. If he could make a record that Mom and Dad would dig, too, fine, even if it did turn out kinda muzaky. But the Stones bear love for—what, besides the Stones? . . .

. . . "Rip This Joint" makes great party music, and the lyrics don't have to mean anything—"Short Fat Fanny is on the loose" probably says more, after all, than "she's a sweet black angel/Not a sweet black slave." And the sax solo is okay, which is more than can be said for the one in "Casino Boogie," which is decent filler, sort of like a messier "Parachute Woman" (but that was always a little too clean). It also contains a sort of guitar solo, mixed way down, that ain't much.

"Hip Shake" has a good vocal and superb production—this is one case where the hazy quality of the sound really works, imparting a smoky, sleazy club feeling. Only trouble—and I swear this is the truth—is that *Love Sculpture's* (an English power trio fronted by Dave Edmunds) version of this song fucking cuts the Stones'! Even if Mick does fill the proportions of Slim Harpo better.

But "Stop Breaking Down" is the killer king of the jive sides here, with harp work which is again masterful and a fantastic vocal. It's one of the few songs on the album that *demands* that you move with it. The ensemble work is full and strong and distinct for once—Jesus, you can *hear* everything! Wham! *This* is the Stones! Energy and conviction and the raw sass we've always loved 'em for.

The songs that seem to be about something more than just letting the good times roll include a number of rocking scorchers among the aimless eviscerated dribblings and sheer dreck. "Rocks Off" is a perfect opener in the Stones' tradition, and one of the most successful things here—even the brass sounds good—but there are no solos except for a bit of guitar that seems to come curling out of the rolling ball of noise just seconds before the fade. The lyrics, occasionally distinct, are some of the album's best. They bear a strong undercurrent of uneasiness. "I always hear those voices on the street/ I want to shout but I can hardly speak" would seem to sum up almost perfectly the Stones' dilemma *vis a vis* themselves and this record.

Where the album really begins to break down is in the ballads and slower, more moody and supposedly "serious" and "meaningful" songs.

"Sweet Virginia" is one of the worst, with some Dylanish harp, a bit of mandolin, and an awful, tired vocal. The lyrics pretend to mean something, and want you to think that some sort of statement about America is being made, neither of which is true. Lines like "Thank you for your wine California . . . yes, I got the desert in my toenails . . . but come on down Sweet Virginia" are totally fraudulent. The sloppiness is just sloppy (although the horns are nice).

"Just Wanna See His Face" has great upright bass work by Bill Plummer, almost reminiscent in its capacity to haunt of Charlie Haden on early Ornette Coleman things. The song itself is somewhat adventurous in a weird avant-gospel way. On one level, you get the feeling that the Stones, trendy as ever, just wanted to write a song cashing in on the current Jesus-rock fad. On another level, they seem to be saying that they're not believers: "I don't wanna talk about Jesus—just wanna see his face" Big deal.

"Sweet Black Angel" also rings false, like a sop to the people who criticized "Brown Sugar" on racial grounds. Arrangement, performance, and production are all okay, a little clearer than most of the rest.

And the whole thing runs out of gas about 2/3rds of the way through.

In the end, there are two things that must be said about this album. First, it really isn't bad, with certain exceptions. A decent run-of-the-mill record. But the Rolling Stones have not been noted for decent r-o-t-m's. Most of side one is really great and all of it listenable, and 3/4ths of the last side really makes it, too. But side two alone amounts to a vast, unremittingly horrible graveyard.

The second thing that must be said, as if you hadn't guessed from reading the preceding tangle of self-contradictions, is that *Exile On Main Street* inspires endless ambivalence. One day you think you're beginning to love it, the next it's almost a total bummer. What it lets you feel, constantly, is mistrust and sadness.

I hope against hope that the Stones aren't going to drag all those goddam horn players and sidemen along on the tour, although they undoubtedly will, since they're so prominent on the record. Maybe they should, to help keep us from noticing the decline of Keith's imagination.

It's all so strange, I almost wish the record hadn't come out, so we wouldn't have to confront the decay of the Rolling Stones. Maybe this is the only way they can find to begin confronting and reversing it themselves. In which case this album is as important and necessary as *There's A Riot Goin' On* and *Self Portrait*.

Then again, maybe it's just the natural process of growth and decay taking its toll at last on the final holdouts from this initial mid-Sixties explosion. Nobody, but nobody, ever said any rock-'n'roll band was supposed to last forever. And just maybe the next few albums from Dylan and the Who will complete the cycle begun by the Beatles and Stones, and we really will have to begin to look to the younger bands in a serious way. It wouldn't be any particular surprise.

*—Lester Bangs*
*August 1972*

# Keith Richards
## The Pusher Behind The Stones

BY BARBARA CHARONE • OCTOBER 1976 • PHOTO BY ROBERT MATHEU

At five o'clock in the morning, Keith Richards sits sipping Jack Daniel's in his hotel room 50 miles west of Glasgow on Scotland's coast.

In a room next door Keith's six-year-old son Marlon is sleeping soundly. Beside Keith is a small cassette recorder which plays throughout the interview a tape of that night's Stones show along with various reggae cuts and a tape of Keith playing with a group of Jamaican Rastafarian musicians. As the interview progressed, I noticed that Keith spoke in much the same way that he plays the piano, delivering his words with a strong, hard emphasis.

*Ron Wood seems to have made the band more human . . .*

Same as Brian. The right kind of chemistry. *More* right than Brian. Mick Taylor is basically a cold fish. I like him, he's a great guitar player but basically he's the type of guitar player that should be in a band with only one guitar player. Woody's made for two guitars but he just hasn't had the chance to do it till now. Woody's strength, as is mine, is to play with another guitar player. None of that virtuoso clap trap. *Now* it's starting to come out.

*But the guitar replacement didn' t really matter much on* Black and Blue?

No, but if the truth be known how many Rolling Stones albums are there with only one guitar player? Brian didn't play much on record once he started to decline. It's no hassle for me to make Rolling Stones' records without another guitar player. I know what part should be played but not who should play it. Till Woody came. Now it's perfect.

There's a few things we've written since Woody's been in the band that have been knocked together at rehearsals that's very promising stuff. We've got a third writer in the band now. Woody can write too. Mick and I never wanted to do it *all*. It's just been forced on us 'cause no one else in the band was particularly a good writer.

I hope *Black and Blue* is the first step in Mach III and not just another extra special and good Rolling Stones album. It's hard to tell 'cause it takes people so long to get into the album. The only bad review of *Black and Blue* had *Exile* held up as a classic and three years ago they couldn't stand it.

*You seem more prominent on* Black and Blue.

Me? That's to do with having to be in control of the band. With guitar players coming and going, I had to stop them from being jams and just put my foot down. That's probably what pushed me to not do what everyone else was doing. Same as Ollie Brown has probably pushed Charlie harder, feeding Charlie ideas all the time. Charlie playing more solidly gives me more room. I can forget a bit of the really basic shit. Now I know if I try something completely different it won't all fall to pieces anymore.

Charlie and Woody are improving which makes it possible for everyone else to improve. I've got some tapes at the end of the last U.S. tour which are very good but don't cut a patch to what's happened *now*. It's gone beyond what we did in America.

*You seem to be enjoying feeding the national British press outrageous stories like "Keith To Wed Onstage In London," things like that.*

They've got no sense of humor. They're all so short of copy. I expected that to be blown up. I thought I'd feed them a line and see what they'd do with it. Awkward English reporters. They need a good angle. Feed people one angle; then they spend the rest of the year demolishing that. They're not interested in music.

They might be put on crime next week. There's no such thing as bad publicity anyways. If they put your name and picture in, OK, great. Thanks.

Sometimes you've got to be careful what you say. When Mick's been in the office too much and away from playin' he tends to see it too much like product. He shouldn't get into the business end. Mick shouldn't take any points for himself from Bowie or Zeppelin. That business aspect disappears when he's onstage. It's only the period when there's nothing else to do that he gets into the business end.

*Did you read that amazing thing Ian Anderson said about the Stones and taxes? [Ian Anderson slagged the Stones and other British rock stars for leaving England for "tax" reasons.—Ed.]*

He sounded more like some provincial tax accountant. Who wants that freaky acid head flute player teaching you about tax anyways?

*Attitudes towards the Stones are strange anyways . . .*

You have to handle them the best way you can. They're not constant towards me or Woody either. It's like a compass needle. People suddenly take 90 degree turns against you. Attitudes towards Mick... they come in a lion and go out a lamb. They see the myth, the hero, the idol.

*But they can' t see past him onstage.*

Sometimes they don't want to. And half the game is not letting people past that anyway. You've got to have all your balls in one court and be a very different kind of person. Jagger's got that instinct. Generally, to save time and trouble, you tend to give them what they want to know.

*You seem to thrive on the road more than Mick*

In a way, yeah. He'll talk like the road isn't important but he knows how important it is. He's just more reluctant to admit it than I am. But there ain't a band in the world that can survive without going on the road. Maybe they can survive in financial terms but eventually it's gonna fuck up the studet the tour going, crank it up and just as you're hitting top gear, the last gig comes and drops for nine months.

*It must be a luxury for you to tour two years in a row without another two year layoff.*

Thank God there wasn't a two-year layoff. I couldn't survive another two year layoff

*Then touring helps the Stones survive?*

It keeps *everything* good. One thing feeds another. If you deny one part you cut off a whole load of things to another part. It's like an eight cylinder engine working on only four cylinders. If everything doesn't pop at once, forget it. Mick knows that same as I know it. Any musician knows that. Even those cats who stay in the studio for six years, finally go on the road and can't. do it.

*Some people seem to be rethinking their attitude towards* Goat's Head Soup.

Yeah, there's some very good things on that album. It's just the wrong emphasis was on certain things. That was the period when *Exile On Main Street* was still a great idea but we'd only just split from Ireland. We'd only been away three months when we cut the fucker.

By the time of *Goat's Head Soup* and *It's Only Rock 'n' Roll*, people had to contend with *Exile* for real and that's why I say that Mick Taylor wasn't particularly good for the group. He joined at a time when with any other band he wouldn't have been forced out of England, forced to live that kind of life that was alien to him. It was unnecessary for him 'cause he hadn't earned any money. We were being forced out on back taxes anyways. He was really an odd man out. There was no way he could feel part of the whole thing as much as the rest of us. *Black and Blue* was more of a band effort. Mick Taylor wasn't good for the Stones. It was a sterile period for us 'cause there were things we had to force through. Maybe it's just me. It was a period we had to go through.

Also Mick is such a *lead* guitarist, which completely destroyed the whole concept of the Stones, that is, the idea that you don't walk into a guitar store and ask for a lead guitar or a rhythm guitar. You *play* a fuckin' *guitar*. You are a *guitar* player. If you just want to fuck about with three strings at the top end, well, alright, but that's not what the Stones are about.

*What do you think of* Black and Blue*?*

I like it. I have no worries about it. I'm just glad it came out when it did because it's signing time baby. [he laughs] and we needed it. It just puts us in a really strong position as far as all that shit goes.

*Why don' t you do* "Melody" *live?*

"Melody" was a bit tongue-in-cheek for me really. It's hard to play live and take it any further. All we could do is make a reasonable copy of the record on stage which I'm not particularly interested in doing.

When groups start they have all their shit down before they record so the group is what they play onstage. When it's time to make an album, you've got all this stuff you've been playin' onstage for a couple years. Bam, that's it, right? Two albums later you run out of material, right? Then everything you put down on tape is being played for the first time. People don't realize the difference between a group's first album and their fourth or fifth.

*Or their 13th . . .*

Sure. What they dug about the first two or three albums is fine, but that's the stuff the band knew back to front. That's what the original band *was* and *did*. That's the problem with all those people relating to "Satisfaction" or whatever. They just want to drag *you* back. Or rather, they want you to drag them back, which is even worse.

Every time we tour there's a few people we have to convince by hauling millions of people into an auditorium and saying Ya Hoo Pumph . . . And they all say "Well, they can still do it." That's not really the point. What matters is the kids. Especially over the last few years there's been this whole bunch of new ones creeping in that weren't around in '73. In America, there were a whole lot of 13-14 year olds that were really into it. It doesn't matter that they don't know the last eight years of the band. So what? Because this isn't *that* band anyways. It's a little bit of the band but not all of it. We're another band now.

*The current lineup seems very flexible.*

We can do more with this particular band than any of the other Roiling Stones' bands. It's never been a case of Bill Wyman not playing something because he can't. It's just been very natural for the two of us being there. Sometimes Bill is late or he isn't able to make a session 'cause after all, he is a Stone alone. [laughs snidely]. I don't mind Bill doing one album but I don't see the point of copping it a second time. You don't make the same mistakes twice. You can print this 'cause I told him. Do the same thing again and people question your motives. Bill is a great bass player. With Charlie, he's a great rhythm section. But it's the Mick Taylor syndrome. OK, you're a guitar player, but that's not enough. Then you also want to be a great songwriter. Suddenly it's not enough to be a musician. It's the case of someone who can do something *really* well insisting they can do a lot of other things well. And they can't. There's no point in forcing it.

*Is that why you and Mick haven' t done anything alone?*

Yeah, because we realize that whatever we did would be a compromise. We'd have to put ourselves in the position of saying "Wow, this song is really good. I'll have to keep it for my solo album and not give it to the Stones."

*Every time the Stones release an album or do a tour, everyone is positive it' s the last time.*

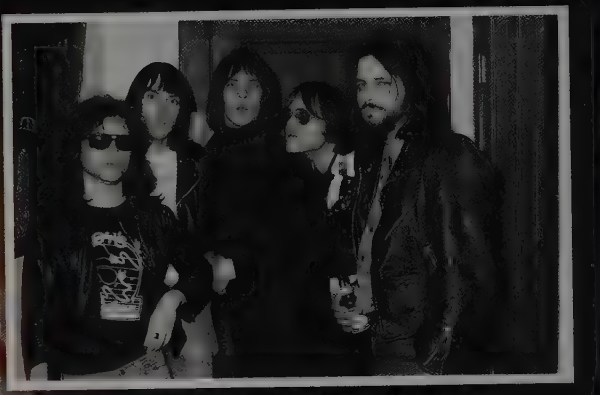
It's hard. When bands have been around this long they should be dead and buried. But we're still here, and you have to live with it. Live with us. To write something new about the Stones is gonna be difficult. Everybody knows the image. but the easiest thing to do is slag it off. These journalists come to Frankfurt, right? Insisted we smoke this fuckin' shitty hash. One guy wants to talk politics. I said I didn't want to. He says "What are you frightened of?" I said, "I'm not frightened. I'm *bored*."

If they're not trying to drag us back, they're just looking for someone else to do it, pretending that they're the Rolling Stones. The thing is we still feel it's getting better for *us*. Playin' is still a turn on. All the hassles are still not enough when weighed against the turn on to call it quits. And there's not that many things that are still a reliable turn on. Even dope can get boring. ■

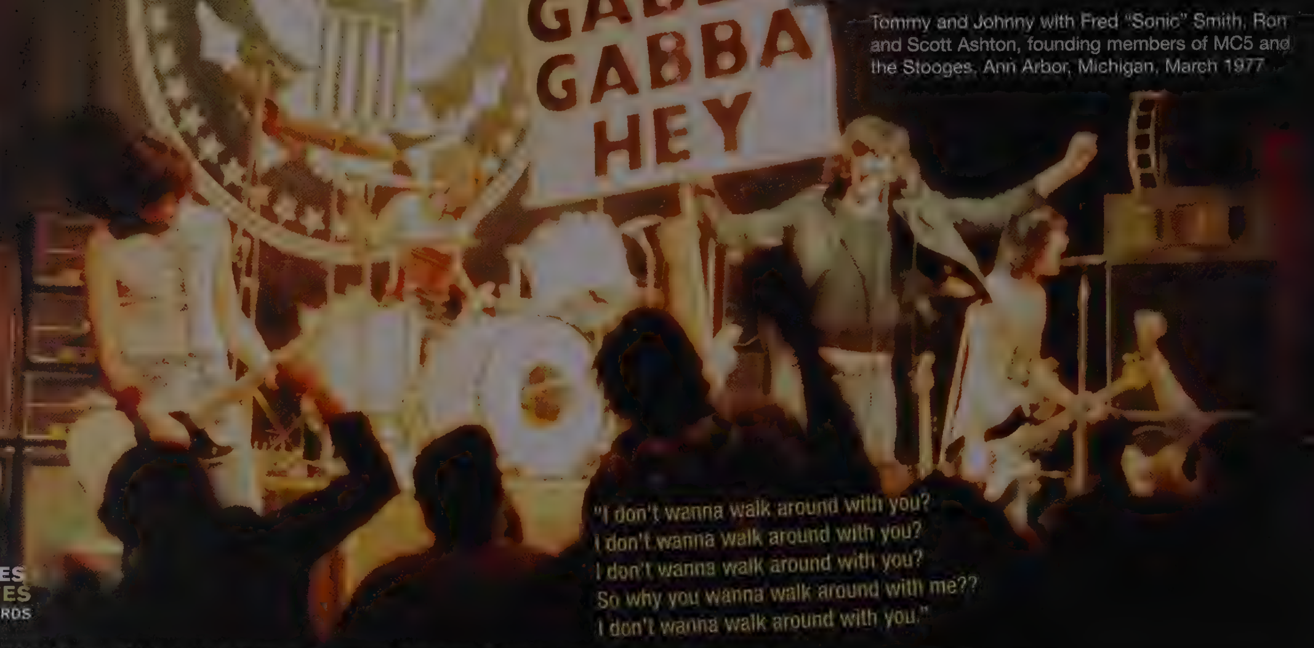
CREEM

*It was great having a chance to play shows with our idols. Johnny looks stunned in the photo; these people were his all time favorite artists, especially Fred 'Sonic' Smith (the similarity of the haircuts is not a coincidence.) It was a meeting of musicians and we all felt the historical implications of that night.*

*—Tommy Ramone*



Tommy and Johnny with Fred "Sonic" Smith, Ron and Scott Ashton, founding members of MC5 and the Stooges, Ann Arbor, Michigan, March 1977



"I don't wanna walk around with you?
I don't wanna walk around with you?
I don't wanna walk around with you?
So why you wanna walk around with me??
I don't wanna walk around with you."

## RAMONES
## RAMONES
**SIRE RECORDS**

The most radical album of the past six years isn't Bowie's, isn't Ferry's, isn't Eno's or Reed's. Kraftwerk couldn't have conceived of such Teutonic conquest in a dozen light years and it's doubtful Bob Marley could've ingested enough ganja to perceive its decidedly non-Rasta dimensions. Oddest of all, it's an album that probably would have stood a 99% chance of being dismissed as archaic, or at best an anachronism, had it been released four or even three years ago. Even if it turns out not to be the clarion squawk of a raw new age, the Ramones' *Ramones* is so strikingly different, so brazenly out of touch with prevailing modes as to constitute a bold swipe at the status quo.

As such, *Ramones* threatens hard rock's current ruling caste (Bad Co., Zep, Frampton, et al.) with a razor sharp E-string to the throat. (Most 'progressive' programmers will assuredly turn away from this album, toke up and thumb-cue that new StillsStonesQueenWakeman onto turntable A.)

*Ramones*: four guys, 14 great two-minute songs, three great chords. Proficiency, poetry, taste, Art have nothing to do with the Ramones. Nor do blues, improvisatory solos or pedal steel. White, American rock 'n' roll is what they practice and in this sense the Ramones are the latest speed-crazed cruisers to drive chicken down that white line that extends straight from Eddie Cochran to Iggy to their own Bowery loft.

*Ramones* reads like a rock 'n' roll reactionary's manifesto. The kind of driven, primal, mindblasting r 'n' r that fueled Stooges fanclubs and formed the editorial backbone of fanzines from *Who Put The Bomp* to *Punk* comes alive in "Blitzkrieg Bop," "I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend" and "Chain Saw." The infusion of the Kinks, Herman's Hermits, fake Mersey accents, DC5, MC5 and BCR into the Ramones' music is all the more crucial, vital to the survival of rock 'n' roll. Once the whole ballgame, r&r has been reduced to a less than flourishing subgenre whose '70s mutation from "hard" to "heavy" has crowned ponderous middle-aged labor unions like Zep, Bad Co. and Foghat giants in the field. Serving its radical function, the Ramones' debut drives a sharp wedge between the stale ends of a contemporary music scene bloated with graying superstars and overripe for takeover. Right now, the Ramones have their hands on the wheel.

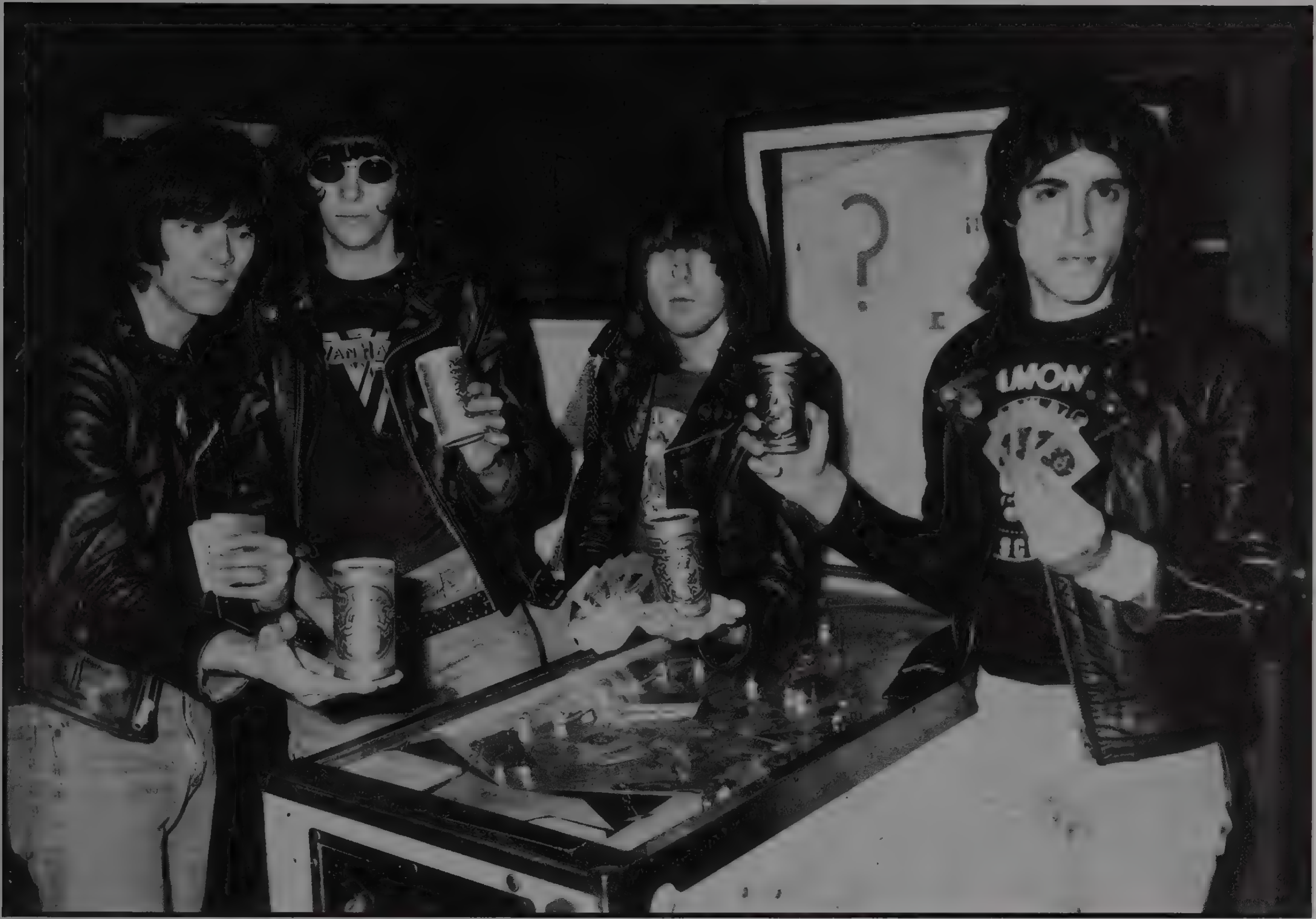
Can the first "New York band" to record survive? Should we expect Joey, Dee Dee, Tommy and Johnny Ramone to "grow musically"; to do their first sensitive ballad backed by the London Festival Orch on Album # Five, or collaborate with Ken Russell on their tenth anniversary? Who cares? The rambunctious speed & noise equation outlined by "Today Your Love, Tomorrow the World" or "Loudmouth" will do just fine for right now. If their successors are one third as good as the Ramones, we'll be fixed for life. Right fucking on. ■

*—Gene Sculatti*
*August 1976*

ROBERT MATHEU (BOTH)

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")



RICHARD CREAMER

# RAMONES

**HOME:** An abandoned subway car between Brooklyn and lower Manhattan.

**AGE:** As old as your mother's worst fear.

**PROFESSION:** Bestowing sneaker bliss on the gabba gabba multitude.

**HOBBIES:** Looking for bubblegum to patch their holey tenny runners, kneecap voyeurism, playing hide and seek and *not* finding each other, posing three-minute solutions to Monster Mash problems, double-dating.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *Rock Scene!*

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Starred in a Roger Corman movie without once uttering the line "Is this the end of civilization?"

**QUOTE:** What else? "Gabba Gabba Hey!"

**PROFILE:** Mrs. Ramone's mistake times four arrived kicking and screaming on the music pages just when things seemed bleakest and the world wallowed in multitraced despair; these lightning fast children of the cheeseburger careened through the biz like a '65 pink Mustang, slicing through pretentiousness with one rusty chop of Johnny Ramone's paw, bringing new meaning to the phrase "All-American," and putting Jimmy Carter to shame. Welcome to the '80s, Miz Lillian!

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

BOY HOWDY!
Creem

***Authentic*** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

BOY HOWDY! ™

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**

# AEROSMITH: TRAIN KEPT A-ROLLIN'

BY LISA ROBINSON • DECEMBER 1976 • PHOTO BY CHARLIE AURINGER

My 1975 summer was spent with the Rolling Stones. When I think of Summer 1976, I think mostly of Aerosmith. Draw your own conclusions.

I kept returning to Aerosmith probably because, as always, they don't do anything wrong. I think they were the only band whose concert I could bear to sit through more than once during this anti-climactic summer.

NEW ORLEANS: It's four in the afternoon and Steve Tyler is awake. He leans over his balcony and shouts to me (I'm at the pool) to come on up. I wanted to dry my hair first, but as I figured it's not too often that Tyler is in such a mood, I go. Julia orders Dom Perignon on the phone; "Wait a minute," Steven says to his lady, "What year do they have?"

Later, Elissa Perry calls. "Do you want to talk to Joe now?" What? This cooperation from Aerosmith, the band with that arrogant reputation?

"Well, I'm not really arrogant," Joe says, "but of course I am moody. It's just that it never really mattered to us what the reviews said, or what the press said about us. Like there was this chick from a paper with 10 million circulation or something like that in England, and she was a schmuck, so goodbye, I just don't care. And that's the way it's always been.

"I guess we've learned not to care that much about the press because of the way those papers treated us in Boston, like we were just some bar band . . . You know, one of the things that probably killed The Dolls was that they had so much press. And you start reading all that . . . I don't know, we were just the total opposite."

David Johansen and Cyrinda Foxe arrive; Joe's eyes light up. David's in town, playing at a club called Cord's, and of course, Joe wants to jam with him later. We eventually arrive at Cord's, and Cyrinda—who is from the South—has all her Scarlett O'Hara instincts out in full force; she's welcoming people to the club like it's a plantation barbecue.

It couldn't be more obvious that Tyler and Perry are in the club; the David Bowie impersonation at the next table attempts to be cool, but the owners keep bringing Moet et Chandon champagne and real glasses full of margaritas for us to drink. (The next night, it was plastic cups and Great Western . . . ) The tension rises as everyone expects Joe to jam. ("You mean he brought his *guitar* with him?" asks Steven, seemingly surprised. Ultimately Tyler gets onstage as well, and they all join in one long blues jam. "I just *love* a blues jam." says Cyrinda.)

It was one of those New Orleans nights when everyone sits on a balcony and drinks too much. What is left of the next day is devoted to The Concert. The outdoor stadium is filled to capacity, and there is much talk backstage about a girl who is "better than Deep Throat." Steven is in the dressing room, posing in front of the mirror, partly for Elissa's camera, [illegible]

Elissa's worried she'll run out of film; "Buy another roll." Tyler advises her. "Your husband's rich."

Then: "I don't wanna go onstage," he pouts. "I wanna have fun!" What? Isn't it fun onstage? "Well . . . you feel good when you go out there, but you're so alone . . . even with all those people . . ." Aha, Lonely At The Top. . .

I like Aerosmith onstage; I don't get bored. But apparently they sometimes do, especially during "Dream On." Joe winces whenever he hears it on a jukebox, and Elissa tells me, "This is my 'bathroom song,'" as she leaves the stage. I like it, I,say. "Give me a break," she says. It paid for your house, I say. "You talkin' to me??," she asks.

(Aerosmith do this thing after the show; it's called Locking Themselves In The Trailer and Not Letting Any Girls In. This intrigued me, so after the fourth time I traveled with them, I asked and was told that Joey Kramer walks around with no clothes on after the show. Well, that was good enough reason for me . . .)

Previously, mention had been made of "meetings" in the dressing room after a show, which I think mainly were excuses for Steven to yell, usually about how he can't hear the monitors. How was your meeting after the show tonight, I ask. "Great," Tyler replied. "We got our fifty dollars tax free."

Joe adds, straightfaced, "I was really *fulfilled* tonight. It was really an *exciting* show.

"Well, you know, we always had a bit of a game plan," Steven tells me, "but we didn't think *this* would happen. I mean, we did the clubs, blah-blah-blah, and then we wanted to do a lot of concerts, but you never really think it's gonna turn out like this fucking mess. It's so big, and as big is it gets, the problems get just as big, and it's all one hair pull after another.

"But basically, I can't complain. I don't think that all these things would arise . . . You couldn't possibly be prepared for every, little thing that has happened, not unless you experienced it. You just couldn't know . . . you had to be there.

"Of course I love all the shouting. I'm not saying I hate it. I love it; by no means do I hate it. I just don't let them get too close. They grab my scarves . . ."

"We're not really commercial," Joe says. "'Commercial' is the name you put on somebody who draws as many people as we do. It's just that we play a certain kind of music that we like, and we're satisfying ourselves, and there must be a lot of kids out there who are like us. It's all sort of just coming through us, all the energy, and that's why so many people are picking up on it. That must be it.

"I don't know, it all depends on your ego, too. I mean if you actually think that you're doing something brand new, and there's never been anything like you before . . . that's ridiculous. I just like to play because I like the way it feels. I like that kind of music."

In Milwaukee Lori Whitford and Elissa Perry were arrested for jay- walking. As they were being taken away to the police station, Elissa insisted on making a phone call. The request was denied, and she was outraged. "I know my rights!! I watch *Adam 12!!*"

*CHICAGO:* Aerosmith occasionally stay in these real plastic, airport hotels. They decided to leave the Ambassador East because there was no room service (*"Can you imagine?? No room service??"*) and they were freaking out. So, once again, it was something close to the airport. Their fabulous road manager Kelly may not choreograph speedy backstage getaways a la the Stones or Zep, but when it comes to getting out of town . . .

It's the usual rock 'n' roll hotel. No matter how hard they try, there is always the feeling that someone had a water fight there the night before and the orange shag carpet is never quite dry.

I got to Comiskey Park just in time to see Rick Derringer's ass hanging out of his "good luck jeans." Beck began to play and Steven, Joe, Brad, Tom and Joey watch from the side of the stage with pleasure. At this point, smoke starts to pour out of the upper bleachers, and huge flames are visible. Thousands of people flee the stadium, and it looked as if the city of Chicago would have its way and forever ban outdoor rock concerts. Beck continued playing, but Aerosmith was quickly hustled out of the place and into safe trailers by concerned roadies. After what seemed like a longer time than it should have taken, the fire department showed up, put out the fire, and "normalcy" resumed.

Manager David Krebs and Kelly made sure that Aerosmith got onstage before the cops could call off the concert. Elissa Perry is ecstatic that Jeff Beck promised her his Yardbirds T-shirt. Joey Kramer is wearing a pink leotard. One fan wears an "Aerosmith Kicks Ass" T-shirt, another one reads, "Sweathog."

The show is the usual success cormplete with Tyler's rag-laden microphone gymnastics, Joe Perry's cool/ blase/lead guitarist manner, and it seems as though Brad and Tom are more center stage than I'd remembered.

That night photog Leee Black Childers hosts a Photo-Approval (this is a new ritual for successful bands) and birthday party. The whole band is there and their concept of when they look best doesn't always coincide with that of the press present. (Which consisted of photog Leee Black Childers and this observer.)

It-was revealing in a way: Tyler knows exactly how he should look, gets mad only if there's too much dental work showing. Joey Kramer seems cynical, Brad indifferent, Tom couldn't be more pleasant and Joe Perry (who hardly ever takes a bad picture but whose hair gets in the way of a great face) is adamant about what he does, or does not like.

SOUTH BEND, INDIANA: Driving by a lake, Tom says, "I wish I could go fishing." He swears that his hair color is natural. Steven has brought along all kinds of sugar for the ride (and this from a hypoglycemic??), cookies, chocolate, and *Oui* magazine. Arriving in South Bend, I ask what one does there. "Run track, play football, pick corn, and get out," answers Tyler.

"Dirt is their main crop," adds Elissa. There is a lot of joking about trying to find the actual Main street, and comments about Knute Rockne Boulevard. We go to eat and the waitress seems surprised when I ask if anything is fresh. It is then that I learn a phrase I will continue to hear, all over America: "Fresh frozen" as in, "All our food is fresh frozen," she says, proudly.

Backstage: "Time to punch the clock," says Elissa Perry as the band runs onstage . . . "

(A word here about "band wives." . . . Despite what you may have heard, it gets lonely on the road. So there's usually at least one who always goes along. Most of the ladies you'd really want to know who are attached to musicians know enough to stay home, but Elissa Perry Is a rare exception. Her sense of humor strongly added to my enjoyment of Aerosmith road life this summer. I kept thinking that I should interview *her*. She continually cracks me up. Elissa discussing, Gene Simmons: "The first time I ever saw him I looked those boots and said, 'Hey, you expecting a flood??' He said, 'Very funny . . . these boots made me my money.'")

"What do I want to do next?" says Steven Tyler. "I'm looking forward to playing Yankee Stadium. Kel, are we playing Yankee Stadium? No? Well, I'm looking forward to playing Yankee Stadium someday.

"I want to hang-glide," he says. "I want to get up in a balloon and go to Oz. Last week we played a show and this guy was doing a political thing and he had a balloon he was going up in. I looked in it . . . it was like a whole *world* in there . . . a basket . . . It's something I've always wanted to do. I'm serious."

As for success: "I don't know about the rest of the band; I'm flabbergasted sometimes. And sometimes, I don't know . . . I feel like I could take it or leave it."

Lest this sound too serious: "I'm getting a watch, although I'm not too much on time. I even take a ruler to bed with me." (Okay Steven, *why* do you take a ruler to bed with you?) "To see how long I steep."

SAN FRANCISCO: *The* Rolling Stone *Cover Aftermath*: Steven is wearing the usual silver cross and gold razor around his neck. We take off for the Cow Palace and The Inevitable Subject arises. There was no way you could have been anywhere within miles of this band this summer (indeed, the entire music industry) and not have heard something of the Story of The Cover. It was as much a part of Aerosmith's summer tour as was any show, and phone lines were buzzing for weeks.

Essentially what happened was that a photographer came to shoot the band; they expected one thing, she another. It was explained "how difficult it was to get all of the band looking good in one shot," promises, threats, excuses and more were bandied about. CBS execs were dragged in . . . all over The Problem of The Cover. Let's just say that when all the shouting was over, Aerosmith was *not* smiling about The Cover.

I tried to tell Steven that hundreds of years from now THAT photo (which someone said looked like Carl Malden) will say more about rock 'n' roll road life than all the adorable ones put together, but he's not buying it. "I wish you'd say something about that episode," he says with anger. "I mean aside from the goddamn photographs, that story . . . he took quotes from other stories. I mean, what band was that supposed to be about???"

Joey Kramer, at the Cow Palace was wearing an astounding outfit. Black T-shirt, suspenders, cutoff jeans (at the knees), short sox, blue and white sneakers. The fans love it as he tosses dozens of drumsticks, into the audience during his drum solo. As the band goes offstage for a brief rest, I amuse them with my stories of other bands who have been known to return to the *hotel* during the drum solo . . .

After the show Joe laughed, "Everytime I fuck up onstage someone throws something at me these days. Maybe it's a coincidence, but when it happens I feel like goin', "Yeah, you're right.'"

It's very late and Joe is talking in his hotel room. "So Brad and Tom are farther up front than you remembered . . . Gee," he says cynically, "You mean it's not like Bill Wyman, they're not standing far back enough?? Well, good, they're getting off on it."

Then, talking about Jeff Beck (a favorite subject) he says, "You know, money really changes things. Sure I liked buying things. I got into it. But you can't let it determine the music you play. That's why I think Jeff is so great. He always does whatever he wants onstage.

"The Dolls . . . man, they were so great. With their image and the way we play we could have sunk a continent. Steven is the eternal teenager. When he's forty-five he'll want to pull a chick in the first row . . . "

"I don't have the same responsibilities as a lead singer does." I'm guitarist and I could walk into any room with a band in it and pick out the lead guitarist . . . But I feel that I'm fronting my own band, this is the band I want."

Joe and Elissa call me from the Beverly Hilton to tell me, a) that "there are eight prints on the walls" and b) Jeff Beck jammed with Joe onstage at Anaheim. "History was made!" Elissa said excitedly into the phone. "It's the first time Jeff has jammed with an American band, they played on 'Train' and 'You Ain't Got Me,' I taped it, and Joe was even smiling onstage."

*POSTSCRIPT: The Beverly Hills Hotel, September:* Steven and Julia and Joe and Elissa decide at the very last minute that they will attend Don Kirshner's *Rock Awards* TV show where Aerosmith has been nominated" for "Best New Group" (they've been together five years).

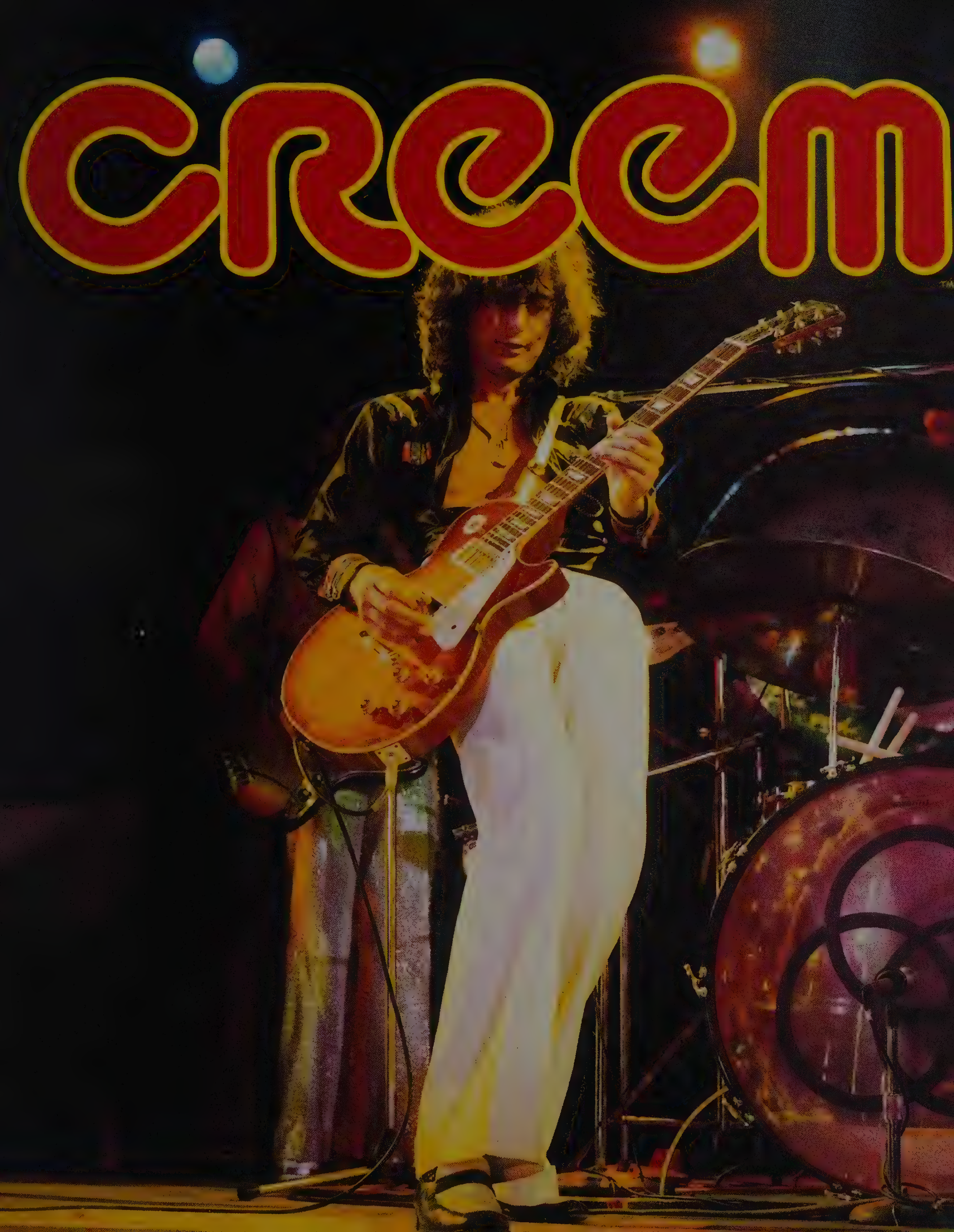
They leave immediately after losing to Hall and Oats ("Hall and Oats?? It sounds like a cereal," from Elissa "we should have been 'good sports' and stayed, but it was sooooo boring," she added. "The best thing was watching Jeff Beck's band during Rod Stewart's number . . . ")

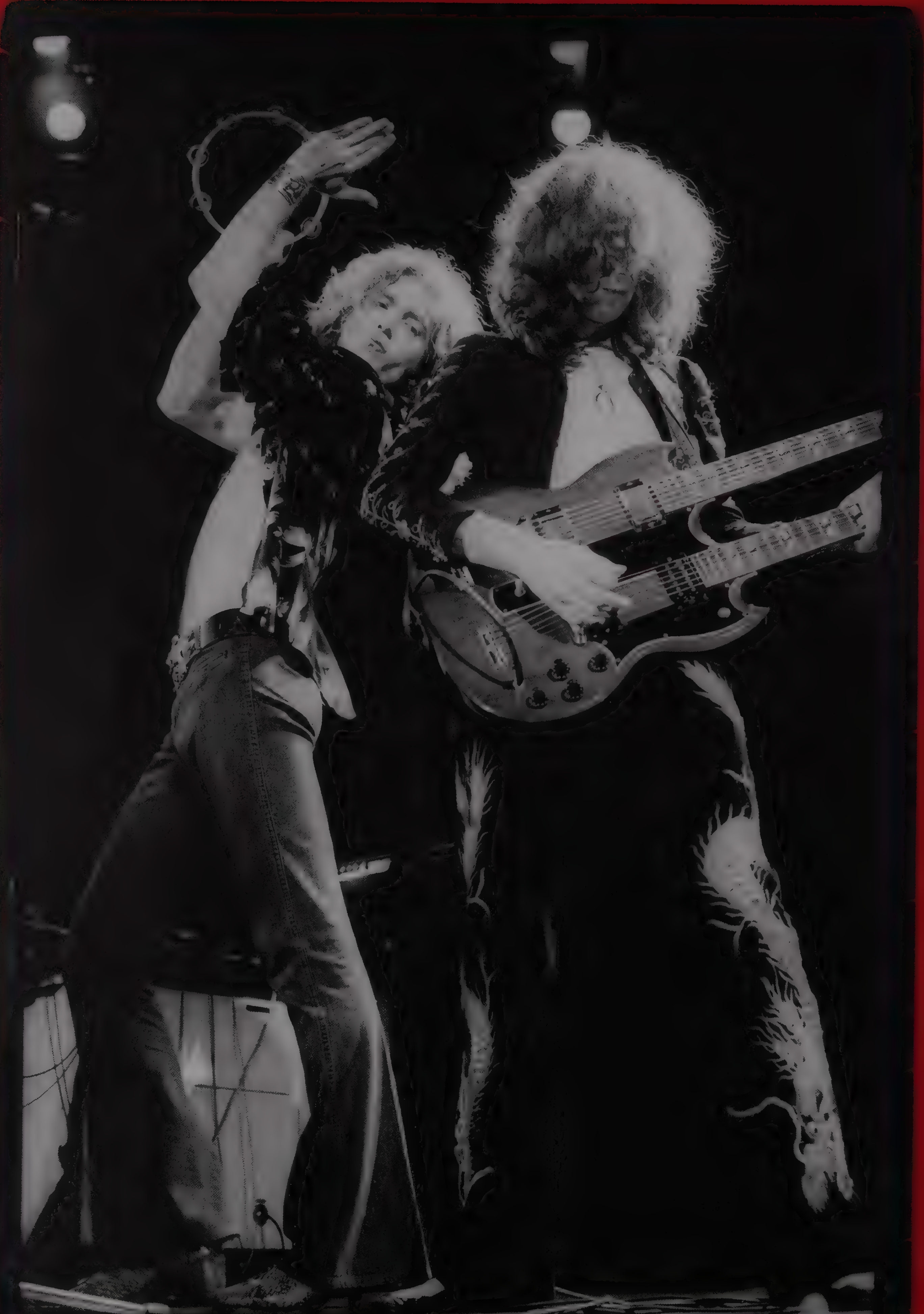
When I left them, Joe was waiting to get together with Beck to hear some tapes, and I heard that Steven Tyler was on his way to Malibu to party with Mick Jagger.

Aerosmith, Summer of 1976.

You had to be there. ■

CREEM





# Led Zeppelin

## One More for The Road

BY JAAN UHELSZKI • JULY 1977 • PHOTOS BY NEIL ZLOZOWER

**FLASH:** *April 19, 1977, Cincinnati, Ohio: Led Zeppelin, a British rock group, again brought violence in its wake when about 1,000 fans tried to gatecrash a Zeppelin show in Cincinnati last night. Police arrested 100 punctuated by thrown bottles and fights.*

"Just as I was approaching some semblance of slumber, there was a dull thud, a louder crash, and suddenly the wall between my room and the next was lying in pieces on the floor. Needless to say, I was awake. Shit, I knew this was going to happen, I muttered to the intruder. 'Yeah, but did you know it would be the Prince of Peace?' inquired Robert Plant gleefully."

I suspected that Led Zeppelin's legendary form of rock 'n' roll expressionism (commonly referred to as "Zeppelinizing") still existed, when the location for this interview was suddenly changed to an uninspiring single occupancy, Gidget-Goes-Continental breakfast room in Chicago's Ambassador East Hotel instead of in Plant's suite of rooms, as originally planned.

"I went down to the front desk to plead for a new room. The clerk protested until I asked him how he'd like to reside in a room with wall-to-wall hamburger patties, uncola-drenched bedsheets, French-fried plastered walls, mustard-smeared mirrors, a sixteen-piece telephone and gutted cushions where the furniture used to be. I got a new room immediately."

"You know on some nights after a gig, it's just like the 1973 Led Zep tour [more commonly referred to as the Continental Hyatt House Capers, to the initiated], we've already equaled that, even in our short stay," Robert Plant confessed, when I mockingly inquire whether the band is mellowing with age. "The management has been most kind," chuckles Plant, lead singer of rock 'n' roll's biggest band, both in popularity and tales of debauchery.

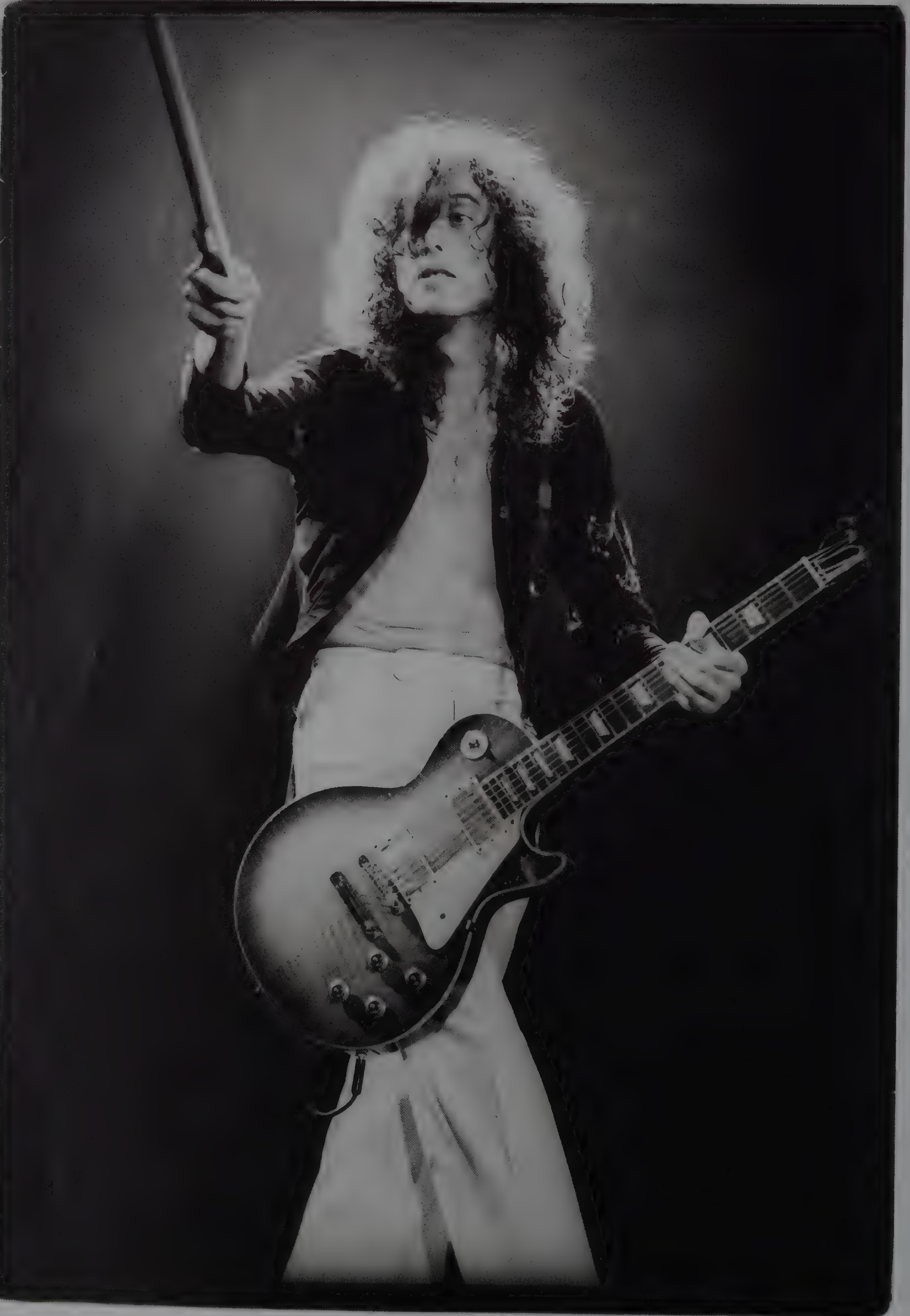
"It goes as far as it does because it's a laugh. It's not any release, you know all that shit about road fever is just bullshit. We only do what we do because it's fun," Robert tells me playfully.

"But Robert, what is it? and how far does what go?"

Robert's only reply is a coy and knowing smile.

"Well, Robert, if you don't want to talk about specifics, why don't we discuss the . . . er . . . psychology of the lifestyle of rock 'n' roll on the road?" I prod.

"Ah . . . " he settles on one elbow savoring his own images before continuing. I'm surprised he didn't lick his lips. "The lifestyle of rock 'n' roll is to live well and to take a good woman."



Well, does our daring rake ever find one of his female followers trying to lure him away from his happy home back in Merrie Olde?

"Yeah," Robert replies a bit reluctantly. "But you know people can't fall in love with me just because I'm good at what I do."

"But do they?"

"Errrr . . . Yeah."

"So, what do you do, put up a red flag and say don't get too involved, I'm married?"

"You've got to do that or say, 'Hey, you've got to go,'" he says resolutely. "The time may never come that I'm influenced, but I am prepared to go out and look . . . Whoops, I hope this doesn't get back to England!"

Robert doesn't have much to worry about; Swan Song Records makes sure that as little as possible of Zep's afterhours antics ever see the light of day, much less the public eye. Much of the mystery of what goes on behind closed doors (or closets for that matter) remains a matter of speculation and rumor.

There is the ever-present bodyguard barricading the hallway with a chair propped outside his room, so he can both scrutinize all seventh floor trafficking and watch continuous color TV, making it difficult to be a first-hand observer of any of the dirt that lies bidden under the sand-colored shag carpets of the Ambassador.

Six days into an American tour, the backstage broadcasts are scorching with new and improved tales of the perverse.

"You've got to be kidding, *nobody* can do that non-stop for four hours!" . . . "In a fishbowl?" . . . "You mean the limo driver never even turned around?" . . . "He did all that and walked away from the table?" . . . "It cost how much to keep it quiet?"

But wouldn't you be disappointed if there weren't *any*? I know I'd be aghast if I heard that Zeppelin had cleaned up their offstage act.

"It was about 5:30 a.m., and I had finally managed to sneak away from all the carousing and carnage of the past 48 hours, and had successfully thwarted Bonzo from breaking down my door or dousing me with a wastebasket full of what I hoped was water. Bonzo was entertaining himself by going from room to room with a broken bedpost slung over one shoulder, demolishing as many rooms of Swingle's Celebrity Hotel (where everybody is a star) in as little time as possible."

**FLASH:** *January 29, 1977, Oklahoma City, Okla. A three-day vigil of Led Zeppelin fans resorted to desperate measures as the cold became more intense and they began tearing down fence posts to feed the fires they had built in metal cans.*

Last August, Jimmy Page told writer Cameron Crowe: "I'm no fool, I know how much the mystique matters, so why should I blow it now?" And Page is right, by casting himself as his own Loch Ness Monster, sequestered between tours in Aleister Crowley's former castle, he only adds to the enigma that goes on forever. Whatever the chinks in Led Zep's armor, we'll never get to know without a can opener.

My first encounter with Jimmy Page was not what you'd call cordial; if I want to be kind, it was chilly at best. He sauntered unsteadily into the room on his obscenely (and enviable) thin legs (I'm certain he couldn't possibly even measure into a jean size of 27 long), dressed in his regalia of the night before, which caused a passerby in the hotel lobby to remark to her companion, "If that's not a rock star, he's a flaming wonder!" The attire in contention, or should I say, *attention*, was a pair of white billowing military jodphurs, a bit on the soiled side today, a crayola crayon-colored magenta blazer, strange braided leather appendages that trailed down his backside and scuffed umber, knee-high boots. The outfit was flamboyant for evening, much less mid-afternoon, and Page looked anything but flaming—I'd venture he belonged (as usual) in the pale and gaunt category, probably due to his recent bout with the flu which caused Led Zep to stop midway through one of their Chicago concerts because Page was too ill to continue. He informed Janine Safer, Swan Song resident exec, (and Girl Monday through Monday) and myself that he hadn't eaten in three days (but when he does ingest a meal, it's liquid, he revealed—something he concocts in his own room out of vitamins, bananas and a blender); so I attribute his unsteady entry to ill health and not drugs since his dark eyes are remarkably clear. Anyway, the general consensus of the members of this tour is that the usually excessive and overindulgent Mr. Page is virtually drug-free. In fact, Robert was overheard to say that this is the first time in years that Jimmy has been straight, adding that this was just like the old days. "I haven't had this much fun with Jimmy in years," Plant testified.

Jimmy's commentary also seemed to substantiate the testimony, when he retold the case of the missing quaaludes (more on that caper later): "I don't know who the doctor thinks he is, asking me if I took his drugs, especially now, when this is the first time I've been healthy in years."

Oh, so we can reasonably assume that healthy is a euphemism for straight.

After his initial tirade we got around to introductions, and as I am introduced as working press, the ever inscrutable Mr. Page flippantly announces that it's now time for him to "cellophane his mouth." I didn't expect anything more from him, considering Page and the press have traditionally been in uncomfortable company. To further punctuate his point, Jimmy informs me that he intends to have a cocktail party (where, here?) and was going to invite just everyone but the press. "They only come for the free drinks," he says darkly, angrily flicking the ashes from his cigarette onto the floor to further illustrate his disdain.

But, paradoxically, he is very interested in my reaction to the previous night's performance. I inform him I've seen better Zeppelin, and thought this particular show seemed a little lackluster; more remote than control. Janine makes the comment that both the Minneapolis dailies and Robert echo that sentiment. I added, but not in any act of appeasement, that Page seemed more enthusiastic and animated onstage this time than in the previous tour.

"That's why Robert is so pissed," Jimmy said solemnly, without betraying whether the comment was in jest or not. "I'm very animated, that's because I'm happy," he told me.

"In fact, I think there were some tremendous moments last night. It was very intense . . . " he trailed off, looking vaguely out the window at the parking lot below.

Yeah, like during the acoustical set (when Jimmy's guitar is equipped with a shorter chord than usual) when he became so absorbed and enraptured in his guitar work that he leaped out of his chair and edged toward the end of the stage—unplugging his guitar in the process.

Suddenly brightened by some memory (the same one?) of last night, he adds, "We were tight, yet loose. Loosely tight." As if savoring the phrase, he says, "You know, someday I'd like to call an album that, Loosely Tight."

**FLASH:** *January 30, 1977, Houston, Texas: In South Houston, police had to call in fire trucks to hose down the 3,000-3,500 Led Zeppelin fans who tried to stampede Warehouse Records and Tapes to buy tickets for the band's April concert. Store officials instructed the successful buyers to hide their tickets and leave by the rear entrance of the store, to avoid having them stolen by the crowd.*

Robert Plant is looking as handsome as ever, his red tennis shoes are the chi-chi-est I've seen this side of a locker room, and his perpetually summer blond mane is stiff competition for Farrah Fawcett-Majors. He seems none the worse for his dreadful accident, save his customary tight jeans are a little tighter due to the fact that he can no longer play a vigorous game of soccer for fear of permanently damaging his bad leg again.

Plant is not at all reticent about discussing his car collision of 1975 which shattered his right ankle and leg and halted Led Zeppelin, who were virtually stopped in their musical tracks only months before a massive American tour. As Plant began to recover the use of the limb, and his state of spirit and mind, the rest of the band were released from their uncertain holding pattern. In some odd, inexplicable way, the accident did something for LZ's solidarity, as tragedy often does, bringing the people involved closer together.

The recording of their *Presence* album was largely occupational therapy for Plant and his restless cohorts. They all needed something to vent their collective energies on since their tour plans had collapsed. So, on the advice of manager Peter Grant, Led Zeppelin recorded their seventh album in the surprisingly short period of 18 days. "We obviously couldn't tour, so we decided to make a record, which we probably wouldn't have done if it hadn't been for me," Plant explained a bit wryly.

"What I mean was, against the odds, sitting in a fucking chair, pushed everywhere for months and months, we were still able to look the devil in the eye and say, 'We're as strong as you and stronger, and we should not only write, we should record'; so when we did record I got more enthusiastic and that helped me physically. It was much easier to curl up and be cared for. Once I had reacted to the upheaval, that lying dying vibe, once I came to terms with that, I knew I had to pace myself in such a way that I DIDN'T OVER DO IT. Otherwise, I might be back where I started again. I took a very good, close scrutiny of myself, and transcended the death vibe, and now I'm here again, and it's mad city again."

**FLASH:** *March 17, 1977, Chicago, Illinois: Thirty young men, including several juveniles, were arrested by police during a disturbance around Chicago Stadium, as thousands of people sought to buy tickets for a concert by Led Zeppelin, "a rock group".*

(Speaking of *mad city*.) This tour consists of 40 cities in two legs, over 700,000 tickets sold, and a projected gross somewhere in the altitude of ten million dollars. "But just suppose Led Zeppelin were scheduling their next tour and the tickets didn't sell out and it looked as if you weren't as big as you used to be?" I asked. "We'd just do the tour," Robert replied confidently, maybe a little surprised that I'd even hint that they'd throw in the towel. "We'd tour and become our own best advertisement . . . I mean, our music may change so much in times to come that our audience does diminish. Because I know we won't become passé, we might take things beyond what people are prepared to accept from us. For example, our third album wasn't immediately accepted, but it was a signpost for the continuity of the internal of the internal stimulus of the band. It had to be. It was the next step and people didn't take to it too quickly. They were more interested in where's "Whole Lotta Love." Had we not done that, we would probably have stayed together for only one more album. When you think you've reached a dead end, you have to get off the horse."

Instead of dismounting, they've increased their horsepower considerably; for this tour they're traveling in a luxury Boeing 727, which jets from city to city, and back to the home base they've set up at the Ambassador whenever possible. (As long as the supply of new rooms holds out!)

Tonight, however, the twenty-some persons belted into their cushioned seats are traveling to Minnesota for a two-day stint in the Twin Cities. The interior of this pleasure ship is blue and metallic silver, decorated in early video cassettes, Swan Song's Icarus logo, Caesar's Palace swizzle sticks and a bar dispensing brain-altering banana daiquiris. The mood of the journey is not quite that of four businessmen commuting to work, but more like one of those chartered social excursions sponsored by the Elk's Club or Acme Travel to such exotic digs as Las Vegas or Palm Beach. Maybe it's the caviar canapés, the light chit chat, John Paul Jones' backgammon tourneys, of perhaps the presence of Dr. Larry Something, the tour doctor, who is threading his way through the cabin, passing out pre-"game" vitamins to all occupants of said cabin, regardless whether you're one of the "players" or not. Very coffee, tea, or vitamin E. Dr. Larry is a veteran of two Zep tours and one Rolling Stones invasion, besides being graduate of Harvard. He seems to do little more than administer the occasional throat spray and aspirin, in addition to picking up as many willing young lovelies as medically possible. Tonight, our MD is having an especially heavy workout, beginning with the task to trying to revive Robert's current traveling companion who had just fainted—although probably from the high altitude, of too close contact with one of rock's most desirable dream dates. Two more will crumble before the night is over, and the dear doctor doesn't seem at all amused that he had to discontinue socializing with the giddy Cher lookalike that he's brought along for the ride. Dr. Larry only scowled, an expression he seemed to effect all evening. Especially when he discovered someone had rummaged through his satchel and looted his entire supply of methaqaalude.

He almost wrote his final prescription when he decided to corner Jimmy Page in a bathroom and cross-examine him as to the whereabouts of the stolen sopers.

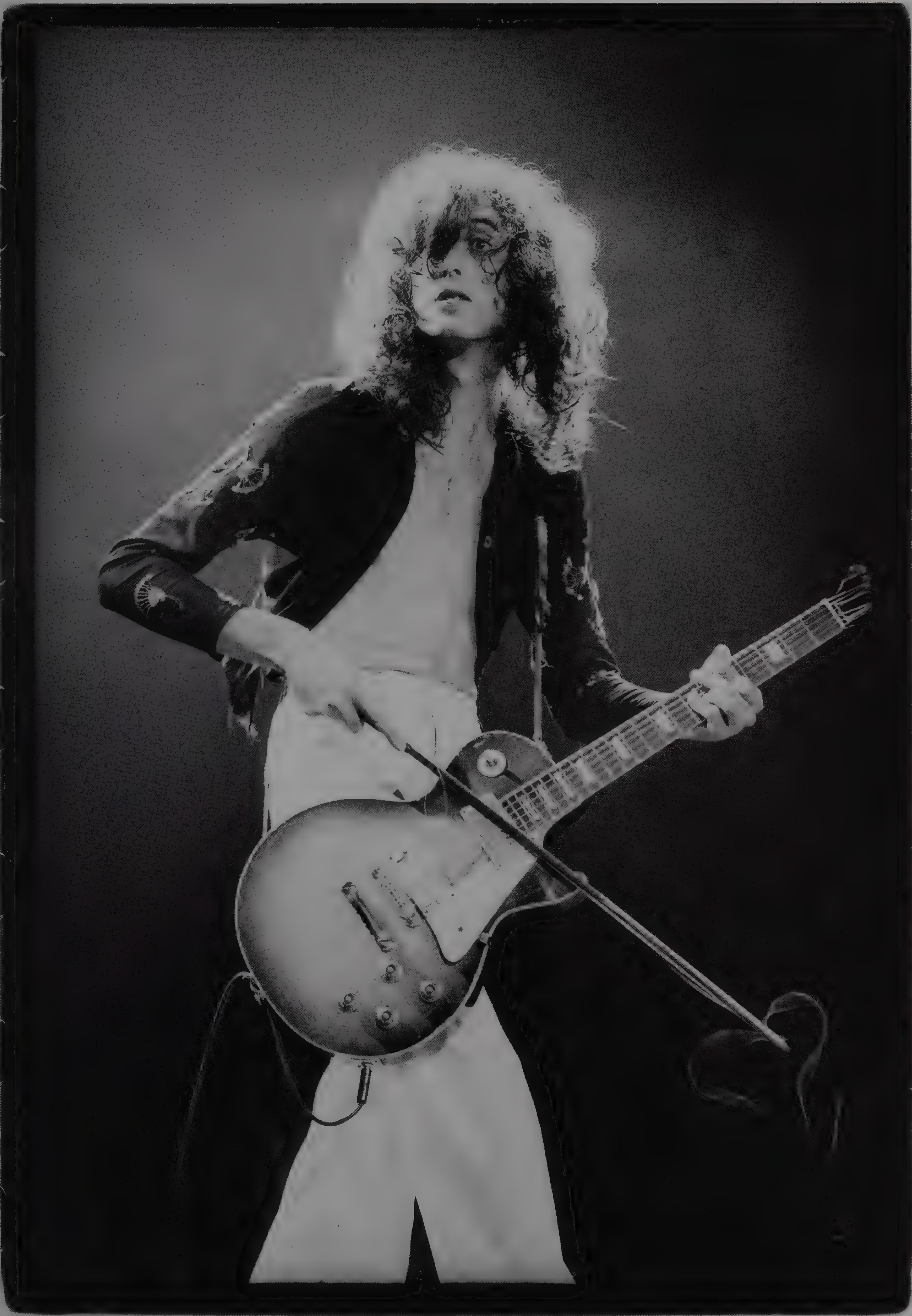
"Accusing me!" Page exploded. "Who does he think is playing his salary anyway?" (Is that a disclaimer?)

Dr. Larry was so outraged and astounded by the theft of his drugs—no major infraction for a rock'n'roll tour of this proportion—that you'd think he'd been hired to perform brain surgery, rather than installed as resident rock medicine man. But the trails of the AMA took a backseat, and we all buckled up again, coasting into magnificent Minneapolis to begin the five point plan which began with deplaning into seven waiting limos, complete with motorcycle escort, to hurry to the Minneapolis Sports Arena, which was teeming with about 18,000 of Zep's most faithful, all in a state of suspended anticipation to experience some auditory euphoria, after their anguishing two-year deprivation, part of which was spent slobbering on the shrinkwrap of the *Presence* album; awaiting the performance of the Real Thing, otherwise known as Led Zeppelin, the defending champs of heavy rock.

The audience will have been administered three hours, seventeen-plus songs, 30,000 watts of hard and heavy rock, English flash blues, and empyrean meanderings from Zeppelin's repertoire. Dished up along with laser beams, a twelve-minute drum solo, smoke, dry ice, extraterrestrial guitar soars and stud-swaggering body language.

You know it's 1977, and Led Zeppelin have been around for nine years now, and I can't help but wonder if part of their popularity is due to the fact that they're the last of an era of cock rockers who play dirty and, if you'll excuse the expression, "chauvinistic" rock 'n' roll, fulfilling all those wild-hearted bad boy aggressions on stage that their audience only fantasize about. This mass purging of underaged frustration makes a Led Zeppelin concert almost a ritual, a coming of age for some, for others a reassurance of the rebelliousness of youth, although there are many fans in the over-30 bracket. (Whatever happened to *Wild in the Streets*?) Sometimes in my more expansive moments, I even have speculated that they represent an entire code of behavior involved with being cool, fast, young and cocksure. You know, rules for living near the edge.

**FLASH:** *June 1, 1977, Poughkeepsie, New York: Rumors of a Led Zeppelin tour scheduled for fall of 1979, spanning 30 cities in 28 days, has sparked off an unprecedented appeal for ticket information. Unhappy fans, when told that tickets were not yet available, resorted to sending plastic explosives to Ticketron offices across the U.S.* ■



# RUNAWAYS

*"These bitches suck. That's all there is to it . . . The whole hype reeks of that age-ole rock 'n' roll maxim—girls are just sissies after all."*

*—Rick Johnson*
*April 1977*

*"Since you seem to know that girls are sissies, come see us sometime and we'll kick your fuckin' ass in."*

*—Joan Jett, letter to the Editor*
*May 1977*

*"Go sit on a sno-cone."*

*—Rick Johnson in a reply to the letter*
*May 1977*

*Our freelance writer, the late Rick Johnson, had a style and sense of humor that remains unmatched today. He wrote what was to be the first of many hysterical reviews of an upcoming girl band called the Runaways. When they came to town (right on the heels of the review), they all stormed the offices of CREEM, gunning for Rick. What they didn't know was that Rick didn't even live in the same state.*

*Although I'm sure they would have preferred hand-to-hand combat with him, instead, they sat down at my desk and typed a scathing letter to him, which was published in the Letters column of the next issue.*

*—Linda Barber Roach*

RICHARD CREAMER

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CREEM

*CREEM magazine and most of its so-called writers provided me with constant fortification to my concrete understanding of how pathetic, transparent, criminal and chimplike the hippie lifestyle truly is. My 'interviews' with Lester Bangs can only be described as hysterical attempts on his part to form cognitive questions that could possibly lead to any meaningful thought process or dialog. His brilliant grasp of real rock 'n' roll can be best identified by his mumbling in CREEM about how my Ted Nugent debut solo LP would be " . . . the final nail in the coffin of my career." Fuck CREEM magazine and all the stinky, filthy, irresponsible pukes who ran it.*

*Drive safely.*

*Fuck you,*
*—Uncle Ted*

# Star's Cars

## TED NUGENT

March 1979
Photo by Ron Pownall

James Brown once said "It's A Man's Man's Man's World." But as any man will quickly add, it would be nothing (nothing!) without a Mercedes or a Bronco: Something chic and sleek for those special dates to Trapper John's Bowling Alley And Taxidermy Shop; something rugged and responsive for those weekend jaunts into Marlboro country. Naturally, a man's man like Ted Nugent knows instictively how to impress the ladies. Now if only his mother would give him back the keys . . .

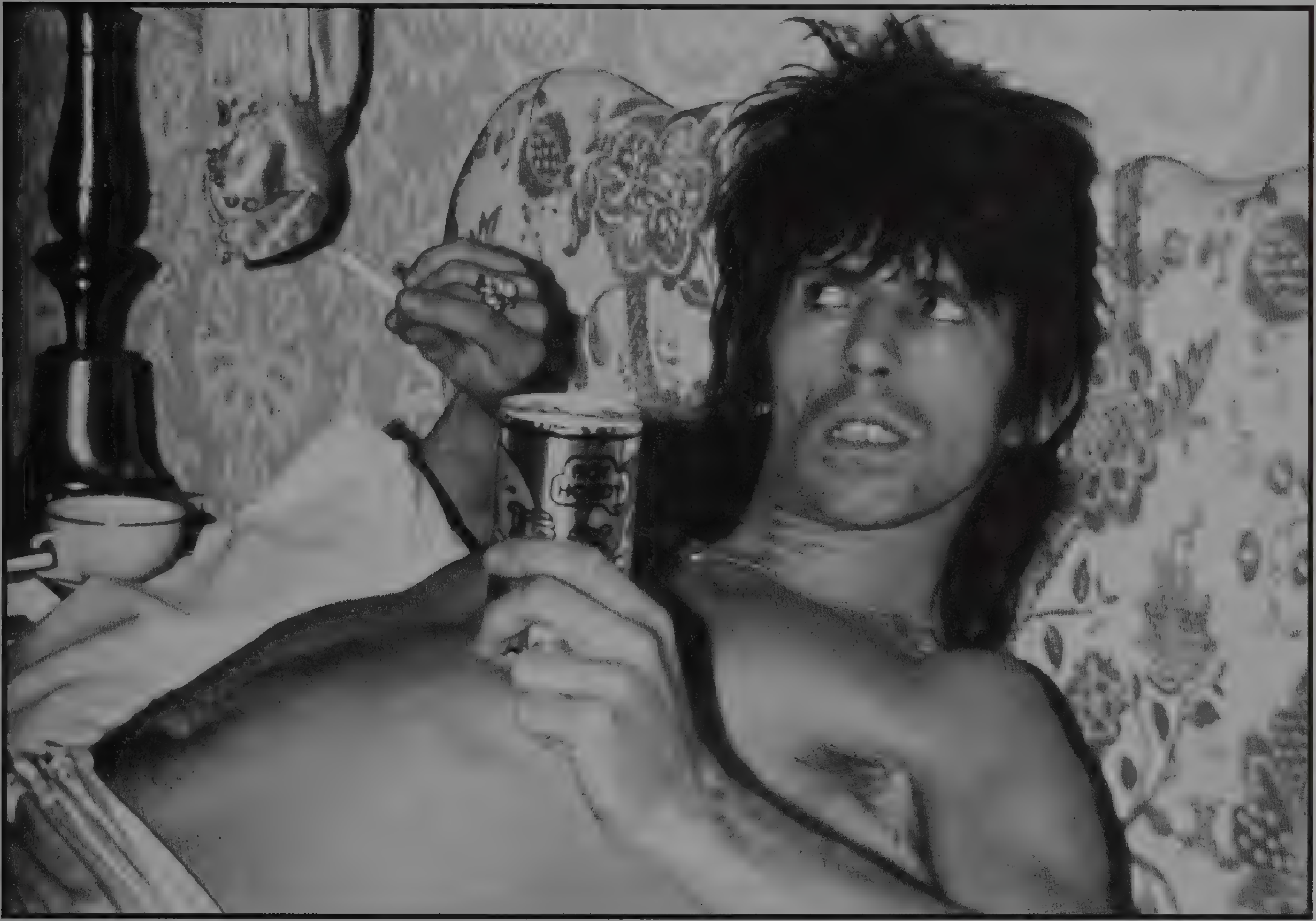
**"You gotta like Ted. Even if you hate his music (and there are legions who would hardly blame you). It's his attitude—the cat, whatever gravel grinds outa his guitar, is undeniably smokin'. Like Popeye, he yam what he yam, for at least eight years now, and he's still as proud as ever, a strict destructionist who's stuck to his guns through trends and obsolescence-in-his-own-time. The Detroit Scene Boom of the late '60s came and fizzled—did Ted care? Now, he was off shooting wild bears, skinning 'em alive and snacking on their intestines. The man stands outside of history. Which is sensible, since the latter (post "Journey to the Center of Your Mind") has consistently ignored him.**

***—Natty Bumppo Bangs,***
***December 1975***

# CREEM

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")



CHARLES BISHOP

## KEITH RICHARDS

**HOME:** Any stop on the endless highway.

**AGE:** Rebuilt from scratch.

**PROFESSION:** Playing the devil's darker half.

**HOBBIES:** Living the devil's darker half. Pharmacosis and potable libations.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *Guignol's Band* by Louis-Ferdinand Celine.

**QUOTE:** "I gave up drugs when the doctor told me I had six months to live . . . "

**PROFILE:** Bastard scion of rock 'n' roll, the only Sixties singer to stick to his guns and avoid all pits of self-parody, Keith is a beautiful black-lined avenger who swaggers in the silt like sleep was a form of the Hustle. Walks and stalks it in the tradition, still raw and almost young, the last first rocker to live forever.

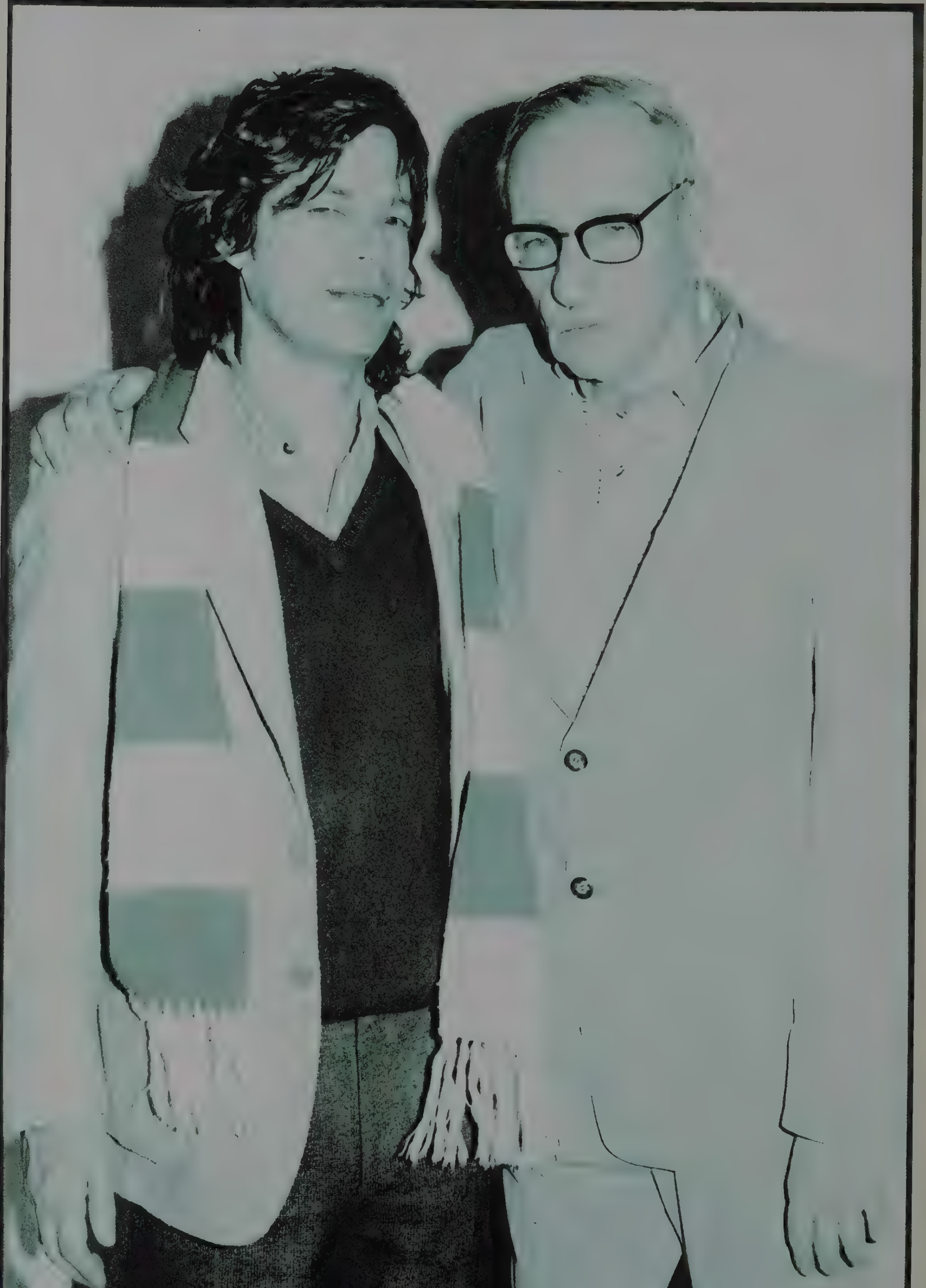
**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

***Authentic*** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

BOY HOWDY! ™

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**

# INSIDE WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS



Mick was glad he went to the London School of Economics class reunion when he saw his old teacher Doc Benway.

BY JEFFREY MORGAN • MARCH 1979 • PHOTO BY MARCIA RESNICK

TORONTO – With 1980 just a shot away, it seems as good a time as any for a cultural update from William S. Burroughs, the spiritual patriarch of rock 'n' roll.

The uninitiated may wonder why this magazine has devoted so much space to a man who will be 65 years old this year. Such readers are advised to pursue some of the man's previous books: *Junky* (written more than a quarter of a century ago under the pseudonym William Lee because Burroughs didn't want his family to read it), *Nova Express*, or *Exterminator!*, any of which will more than pave the way for Burroughs' acknowledged masterwork, *Naked Lunch*.

Of equal importance is *The Job*, a vital collection of interviews which will answer even the most avid reader's questions.

Still, despite the amount of topical ground *The Job* covers, precious little—if any—information concerning Burroughs' personal opinions on rock 'n' roll can be found in print—a situation I decided to remedy somewhat when I recently interviewed him.

**JEFFREY MORGAN:** For many contemporary rock critics and musicians, William Burroughs *is* rock 'n' roll. Do you feel the same affinity for rock 'n' roll that rock 'n' roll obviously feels for you?

**WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS:** Well, yeah. [laughs] I *have* given them a lot of titles: The Heavy Metal Kids, The Insect Trust, The Soft Machine...there are a couple of others.

I enjoy rock 'n' roll. It certainly is a unique and incredible phenomenon. Remember that 40 or 50 years ago, musicians didn't make any money. They played to very small audiences in night clubs and road houses. Also, they had no protection on their records.

I'm always asking rock 'n' roll people if they know who Petrillo is, and none of them do. Well, they wouldn't have a dime if it weren't for Petrillo because he organized the Musician's Union way back at the end of the '30s. And that is why they make money on their records. There wouldn't be any white Rolls Royces or anything like that.

**MORGAN:** Can you see the intersection point between your works and rock 'n' roll?

**BURROUGHS:** Well, I think that, in a way, we're both—I mean, of course, they're operating in much more of a mass area, but the ideas are similar. Some of the content is similar: the drugs, etc. There are a number of places where we overlap.

**MORGAN:** Did you see *The Man Who Fell To Earth*?

**BURROUGHS:** Yes. I thought it had some very interesting sections. It wasn't bad, but I didn't think it was great, either.

**MORGAN:** What did you think of *Diamond Dogs*? Have you heard it?

**BURROUGHS:** Vaguely, yes. It's been a long time since I saw it, actually. Yeah, I thought that Bowie did quite a good job there. I just didn't think that the film overall had that much impact. I thought the alien aspect was conveyed very well.

**MORGAN:** No, no. Did you ever hear the *record* he made after you interviewed him in 1973? The one he made after reading half of *Nova Express*?

**BURROUGHS:** Oh, yeah, yeah. [dryly] That is fun.

**MORGAN:** What did you think of him when you met him? Did he seem to be the kind of guy who was bullshitting his way through life or did he seem to be walking the straight and narrow?

**BURROUGHS:** [laughs] Well, neither one. He's not bullshitting, he's very, very clever and I think very calculating. I think he knows exactly what he's doing and where he's going and how to get there.

**MORGAN:** Did Jimmy Page know who Petrillo was when you talked to him?

**BURROUGHS:** [laughs] No. I'll tell you one who *would* know is Mick Jagger. He's a businessman, he went to the London School Of Economics.

**MORGAN:** How is *Junky*, the motion picture, progressing?

**BURROUGHS:** On again, off again. No Hollywood project is on until it's on screen and it's never completely dead until the whole film industry is dead. Many scripts have been battered around Hollywood as long as ten years, so I won't say it's dead. We have a script and people have expressed interest, so it may work out.

We talked an awful lot about whether *Junky* should be shot as a contemporary film in a contemporary setting, and I said absolutely not. The reason is very simple because the whole junk scene has changed so unrecognizably since that time that, if you start shooting it in 1970, you might as well throw the book away and do another script.

As far as box office is concerned, it's not very good box office. They don't want to see people sticking needles in their arms.

**MORGAN:** How did Patti Smith get involved in the filming of *Junky*?

**BURROUGHS:** Well, she simply said that she'd like to play a part if the film was produced.

**MORGAN:** What is there about her poetry that you like—if anything.

**BURROUGHS:** Well, she is good as a performer. It isn't the poetry itself, it's the way she puts it across. She's a terrific performer, a great stage presence. To read the poetry doesn't mean that much to me, but to see her perform it—the energy that she generates is really something.

**MORGAN:** So you don't care for her poetry on the printed page then.

**BURROUGHS:** No. It's something that's made to be performed, it seems to me.

**MORGAN:** Your long-awaited new book, *Cities Of The Red Night*, is scheduled for release later this year and, at over 700 pages, it's going to be your longest book yet. Can you tell us something about it?

**BURROUGHS:** It's got a very different plot to it. Plots and subplots. It's very much a romantic play with trick endings and so on—so for that reason, I don't talk too much about it. I don't want to give away the ending. [laughter]

**MORGAN:** Is there any advice you'd like to give to young writers?

**BURROUGHS:** I have an exercise I learned from a Mafia Don in Ohio: see everybody on the street before they see you. It's quite interesting actually because, if you see everyone before they see you, they won't see you.

And then you'll find that somebody beat you. ■

CHARLIE AURINGER

# A CREEM EDITOR REMEMBERS

CURSE YOU, LESTER BANGS!!!

Good grief. This is all Lester Bangs' fault. I wouldn't even *be* here if it weren't for him. Three decades of working for peanuts, thanks to the unsolicited intervention of "America's Greatest Rock Critic." I can't stand it . . . What did I do to deserve such a fate? I didn't really want to get involved in this thing. But he handed me this gig and I . . . I gave it everything. Except I never wanted to *be* a rock critic. I never *asked* to be a rock critic. And I certainly never sent in any samples of my writing because I didn't *have* any samples of my writing to send in.

No, I aspired to something greater: I wanted to be a rock *artist*. So in 1971 I mailed CREEM a rock 'n' roll comic strip I'd drawn that I wanted them to publish. A cross between Captain America and *Easy Rider*, "Captain Easy" was the greatest rock 'n' roll comic strip ever created. Oh, you should have seen it. *Everyone* should have seen it. But no one ever did because it was returned to me several weeks later along with a pink CREEM rejection slip that glibly began: "Isn't it fun getting a rejection slip?" Rats.

Needless to say I was crushed, especially since "Captain Easy" had previously been rejected by *Rolling Stone* in 1970. And while I could understand those acid heads in San Francisco not being able to appreciate such cutting edge social satire, I expected a lot more from a Detroit rag that billed itself as "America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine" and actively solicited reader submissions by asking "Whaddya got to lose? Whaddya got?" I'll tell you what I got: I got a match and burned all my artwork, vowing to never make the same mistake thrice. Only I *did* make another mistake—and this time it was such a doozy that I've been living with the consequences of it for the past thirty years: I started writing letters to the Editor of CREEM.

Then one day in 1974 I received a letter which read:

*"Dear Jeffrey:*

*You always write us witty letters even if we don't always print 'em; so why don't you try your hand at some record reviews or especially some Rockaramas, which can be anything from a single word to a short paragraph.*

*"Good luck; I like your writing.*

*Lester Bangs*

*P.S. Also up for movie, book reviews, & Beat Goes Ons."*

I couldn't believe it! Lester Bangs was asking me to write for CREEM! Naturally I did what any other 20-year-old in my position would do. I tossed his letter aside without giving it a second thought because I aspired to something greater: I wanted to be a rock *photographer*.

So when Lou Reed came to Massey Hall later that year on his *Sally Can't Dance* tour, I was snapping away front row center as Alice Cooper strolled on stage to join Lou in a boozy rendition of "Goodnight Ladies." I promptly mailed the incriminating photo to Lester who printed it as part of his legendary March 1975 Lou Reed cover story.

Yes! I was a CREEM rock photographer! Except . . . AAUGH!!! They spelt my name wrong in the photo credit! Well *I'd* show 'em. I'd blitz Woodward Avenue with so many record reviews that they'd *have* to get my name right! Which I did and which they did. Seven months later I received my first byline and—other than a brief fling on July 28, 1977 when *Rolling Stone* printed one of my poems during my "rock poet" phase—I've been loyal to America's Only ever since.

That's because everything I've ever achieved as a professional writer is all due to the selfless generosity of one man. Which is why I'm extremely proud to say that I owe my entire career as a rock critic to Lester Bangs. Yes sir! Good ol' Lester Bangs. That blockhead!

*—Jeffrey Morgan*

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")

ROBERT MATHEU

# REDD KROSS

**HOME:** Somewhere in those silly '70s.

**AGE:** Old enough to remember.

**PROFESSION:** Frosted flakes.

**HOBBIES:** Finding great cover tunes, growing their hair 'till it looks "just right," promoting the aesthetics of junk culture, rockin' out with tongue firmly in check.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *But, Seriously* . . . by Gene Simmons.

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Coming up with such great song titles as "I Hate My School," "Linda Blair" & "Janus, Jeanie & George Harrison."

**QUOTE:** "A nose is for snot, and baby, it's not for a straw and a dollar bill."

**PROFILE:** Brothers Jeffrey and Steven McDonald got this thing together nearly a decade ago while still in the midst of adolescence, added Robert Heckler and drummer Roy McDonald (no relation!) have released several LPs, including the latest *Neurotica* which, as fine as it is, doesn't do justice to how phenomenally funny and rockin' these junk food junkies are onstage. They oughta be stars . . .

**BEER:** Boy Howdy! (Now available in non-alcoholic form!)

BOY HOWDY!
Creem

**Authentic** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

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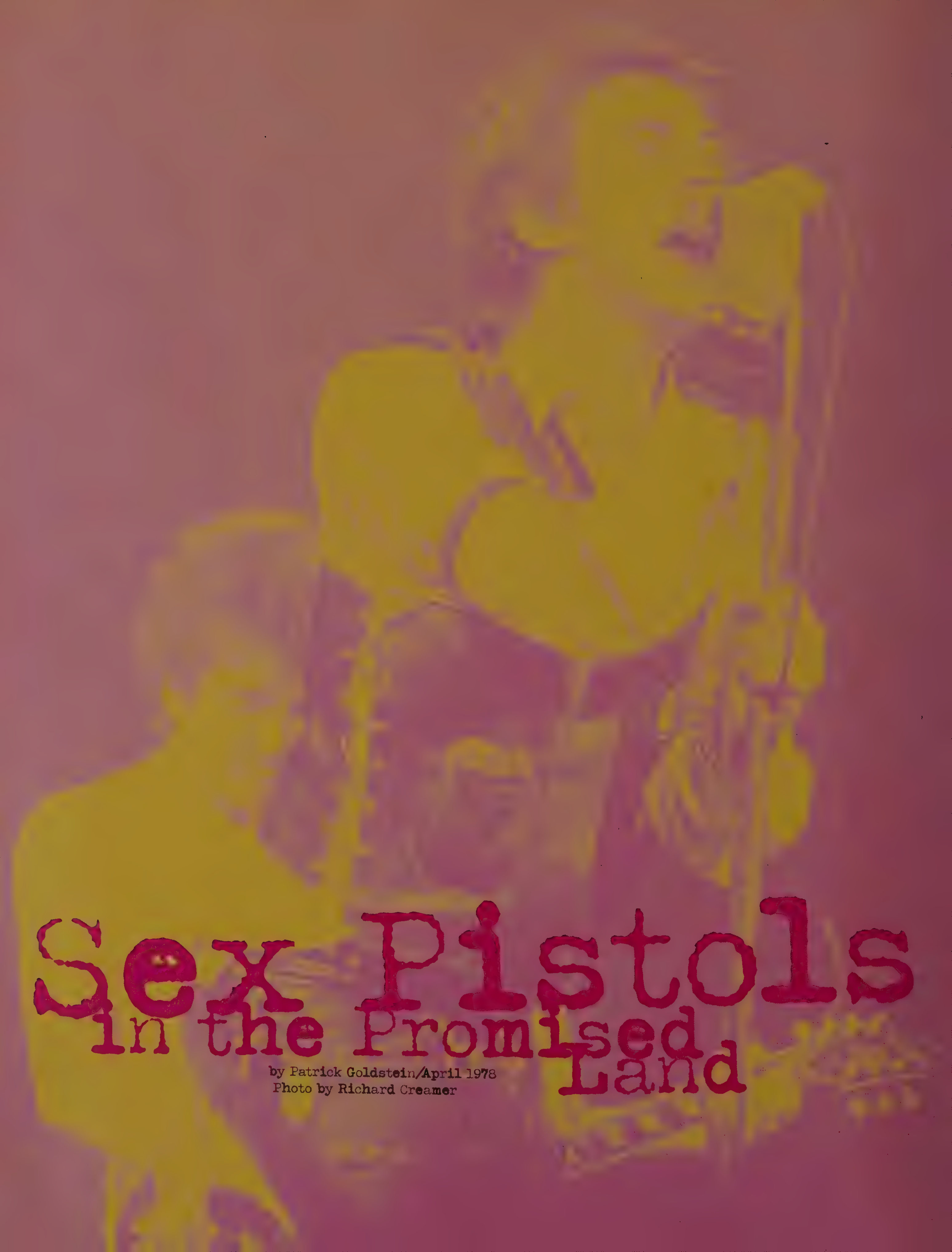


# Sex Pistols in the Promised Land

by Patrick Goldstein/April 1978
Photo by Richard Creamer

**The first thing Johnny Rotten did when he arrived in the Unites States was test out an airport men's room. Apparently America's plumbing passed with flying colors.**

**"They're lots better than the bogs in London," he snorted. "At least they keep the fucking places warm."**

**Johnny was silent on the U.S.A.'s other virtues. "It's just like watching a boring American TV program. I could care less about New York or Chicago. They're just like any other city, you know. It's not the fucking promised land."**

Tulsa, Oklahoma, where I caught up with the Sex Pistols' abbreviated American tour, is most certainly not the promised land. It's a homely city, trapped along the arid southern rim of the Great Plains. The drive in from the airport is enough to fix your cultural bearings; to the east lies Muskogee, home of proud, flag-waving Okies, and at the center of town are Tulsa's twin godheads of education, the American Christian College and Oral Roberts University.

Tulsa's church-going citizenry didn't take too kindly to the Pistols blitzkrieg. When I arrived at Cain's Ballroom, it was under siege, not by rabid Pistols fans and TV crews, but by the Reverend Mr. Black, armed with leaflets, the power of the Lord and a huge banner that proclaimed: "Life is Rotten When The Lord Is Forgotten."

Apparently I looked like a congenital sinner, for the preacher made no effort to heal my spiritual wounds. Instead, he concentrated on a pair of wayward Okie punkettes who wore safety pins in their belt loops and flicked matches between their teeth. They didn't praise the Lord, but they did pass the ammunition, offering the man of the cloth a toke on the joint they were smoking. Horrified, the Reverend frantically prayed for their souls. He was still on his knees when I went inside.

No one could have made a more inspired choice of locale for a Sex Pistols date. The decaying, 600-seat ballroom looked like it had been decorated by a tenant farmer on a tractor. The ceiling was crumbling, the floor was in grievous disrepair and there wasn't a chair with four straight legs in the house.

Only the walls exuded class. They were adorned with ancient, sepit-tinted portraits fo country and western hall of famers like Tex Ritter, Hank Williams, Spade Cooley and Bob Wills, who looked down on thepunk proceedings with what must have been a queer mixture of awe and disgust.

Pandemonium reigned when the Pistols finally took the stage a little after 11 p.m., though actual brawling was at a minimum. The only fight I saw all night broke out over a bottle of cheap wine that a bunch of Okie punks were passing among themselves. A few punches were thrown, one chair sailed across the room and one unlucky kid knocked himself out when he toppled over backwards in sheer punk ecstasy, cutting his head open on the corner of a table.

Later I asked the Pistols what they thought was responsible for the violence at their gigs. Sid Vicious—who staggered across Cain's after the show and threatened to punch out any journalist who showed his face—was openly contemptuous of this constant challenge to do battle.

"It's really sick," he growled. "I don't like it when these cunts in the audience just come looking for a fight." Glaring at me, he added, "I don't fight with people I don't know, I just murder them. Any other group would've packed up and run from all the bottles that've been thrown at us. We just say 'come on, let us have it.'"

To make sure I got his point, Sid waved a bottle of Jack Daniels in my face. That was his way of being friendly. I asked him if he'd ever murdered anybody. Sid smashed the back of my chair. That was his way of being less friendly. Johnny giggled. "Come on, Sid, tell him all about your victims."

Sid grinned. "Well, I'll tell you who I'd *like* to murder," he grumbled, taking a long pull from the bottle. "That bunch of losers, the Dead Boys. 'Specially Stiv Bators . . . Write this down, now!" he ordered, giving my chair another whack. "Tell Stiv I'm looking for him and I'm gonna cut him to pieces."

I wondered why he was so angry with the Dead Boys. "They threatened Johnny," he said. "And anyway, they're fucking poseurs, with all that shit about sonic reducers. Fucking *wanking faggots* is what they are, just cheap imitators living off our reputation."

One of the few bands the Pistols admire are the Ramones, whose July '76 British tour was a major influence on many fledgling English punk aspirants. Vicious' highest praise went to Dee Dee Ramone. "He's like us," Sid said. "Even before I joined the Pistols I idolized the Ramones. Even if they do hate us, I don't care."

As you probably know by now, the Pistols didn't always turn the other cheek on their sojourn across the States. In fact, in a year that brought all sorts of royal oddities to America, ranging from an Egyptian mummy to England's own inept and hilariously innocuous Prince Charles, no one elicited as much outrage and squeamish curiosity as the four little princes of darkness. The menacing quartet of working class misfits rode in on a king-sized tidal wave of media hype.

At every stop on their ten-day, seven-date tour, pushy, ignorant reporters and TV camera crews heralded their arrival with the morbid fanfare you'd normally associate with the capture of a Nazi war criminal. Concert post-mortems were conducted with a similar stench of yellow journalism. You'd think Johnny Rotten was going to steal an atom bomb. Several TV commentators exhibited visible signs of distress when there was no hideous immorality or mass murders to report.

This is not to say that the Pistols were suddenly transformed into angelic choirboys. Even when Johnny was slowed by the flu, Vicious unveiled his own crude, offensive and utterly loathsome stage personality. Sometimes it seemed that Sid spent more time wiping blood off his face than he did playing bass.

His tour battle report reads like a close encounter of the worst kind. Sid used his bass as a bayonet to attack a hostile fan in Tulsa. A girl pulled down his pants and tried to give him head in Baton Rouge. In San Antonio a heckler split his lip with a can of beer. Vicious unstrapped his bass and, swinging it like a lasso, bashed him in the head.

Sid's worst wound—a deep gash in his left forearm that was heavily bandaged throughout the tour—was self-inflicted. Asked how it happened, he chortled: "I cut myself shaving."

The Baton Rouge crowd threw money on stage (Rotten claimed later that he pocketed $30). In Dallas a tough young punkette punched Sid in the face. She said she drove all the way from L.A. to do it. Vicious, surprised to find blood gushing from his nose and mouth, took a couple of seconds to compose himself. Then he spit it back in the girl's face. He proudly massaged the rest of the blood on his chest, like an Indian donning war paint.

"American audiences are pretty tame," Rotten confided the morning after the band's Tulsa show. Hiding behind a pair of huge pink sunglasses, he looked small and rumpled, like a mole that has just emerged from sleeping in a pile of leaves. "Our fans in England are crazy. You can't stop 'em. They bite and claw their way up on stage. We have to encourage the rest of the crowd to beat them senseless."

Rotten held court in a motel room littered with beer bottles, crusts of pizza, shreds of clothing and a broken mirror propped against the TV set. Up close, Johnny looks sallow and misshapen, his hair pointing skyward like uncut weeds. He has the face of a reptile—it's all wrong (or all right depending on how you see it). His cheek lines droop, his grin is lopsided and his nose is bent like a nail that's been ripped out of a wall.

"It's different here in the States," he sighed. "They treat us like we're some kind of circus act. It's really a load of bollocks—everybody wants my fucking autograph."

As if to emphasize Johnny's point, Sid stuck his whiskey bottle under my chin again. "Now that's my autograph," he sneered. "I'd like to autograph someone's face." (Sid thrives on displays of intimidation. Asked why he replaced the Pistols' original bassist, he replied, "because I beat up Nick Kent.") I turned to Johnny, hoping he'd say something. Johnny said nothing, staring right past me.

Sid studied my profile petulantly. "Of course," he grinned, "if I want to kill somebody, I don't want to get caught." I took this as an encouraging sign.

Johnny, in a rare display of diplomacy, quickly intervened. He grabbed Vicious' bottle, took a quick swig and then stashed it safely out of reach. "American kids are really pathetic," Johnny continued. "They put bands like Kiss on a pedestal. Then they sit on their hands and demand a freak show. Well fuck 'em. If they're going to be like that, I'm going to go out of my way to disappoint them.

"We don't care about the bloody money," he snapped. "We could be fucking millionaires and we'd be the same filthy old cunts we are now! Those British rockers are evil, filthy parasites who've done nothing but line their pockets. They're worse than the press—all they do is sing silly, pathetic love songs. You won't see me writing any love songs. I wouldn't know what it's all about."

"Look at Mick Jagger, with his fucking makeup," said Vicious, coming alive again. "I hear he goes round in a bloody wheelchair. I'd like to thrash the lot of 'em!"

To emphasize his point, Vicious pummeled the back of my chair. The British writers on tour with the band had warned that the Pistols enjoyed this sort of adversary relationship with the press. One veteran of this kind of behavior coolly suggested that I pack a gun or a blackjack. Instead, I tried a bit of intimidation.

"How am I supposed to take accurate notes," I yelled half-heartely, "if you're gonna smash my chair!" Vicious laughed at this feeble tirade and began pounding Rotten's chair. Johnny retaliated, landing a solid blow to the shin.

Vicious glared at me and launched another attack on the rock aristocracy. "Keith Richard, big fucking deal," he sneered. "Nothing but a pathetic junkie who goes to get his fucking blood changed. He oughta change his bloody face. I'd do it for him!"

"*Ooohh*, junkies," Johnny chimed in, mocking Vicious' tone of voice. "Don't say *junkie*," Vicious complained. Johnny giggled "I'll say what I fucking well please."

Vicious kicked his chair. "Just don't go round screaming junkie." Rotten glared back, winking at me. "Junkie! Junkie! Junkie!" he chanted.

The Pistols' predominately Southern/Southwestern U.S. tour featured their familiar British guerilla tour tactics. Don't go to the media, make the media come to you. "The Pistols have never played a proper gig in England," one British rock writer explained after one of their shows. "They've always picked out-of-the-way clubs or tiny colleges, with no announcements 'til the day of the show. That way only their followers nad the music press show up, giving the event the atmosphere of a riot. It builds up the mystique if you make it hard to see them."

Most of the Pistols dates were deliberately booked into small clubs, so that even a crowd of 300 seemed like a dense, seething throng. To see anything on stage, you were forced to mount a chair or tabletop. My shaky bar stool perch in Tulsa was constantly buffeted by a frenzied pogo dancer who leaped form table to table, signaling the end of each song by crashing to the floor. His biggest problem was getting back up again. One of his arms had no hand, just a mangled flipper that was geared nicely for applauding but practically useless when it came to picking himself up off the floor.

Live, the Pistols were everything their fans expected and all the curiosity seekers feared. Onstage for a little over an hour, they played at a furious ear-splitting pace, barely pausing to a catch their breath before plunging into a new number. The crush of bodies at the edge of the stage was fierce. One massive bouncer, forced to eject a pair of kids for heaving handfuls of pebble at Johnny, stashed them under a nearby table and kicked them with his pointed cowboy boots when they tried to squirm free.

Rotten was poised in the eye of this rock 'n' roll hurricane. He wore a white shirt open at the collar, with a battered vest and an orange and black polka-dot tie. (Vicious, of course, sported his ludicrously oversized black motorcycle jacket. He looked like a demented Anglo Iggy, baring a goofy grin that scrunched his whole lip into one corner of his mouth.)

Johnny has the truly frightening countenance of someone beset by a host of demons. His face was pale and drawn, adorned only by splotches of acne, crooked teeth and tufts of hair that protruded like horns. He uses this devilish countenance to great effect, fixing the audience with the blank, stupefying gaze of a true punk method actor.

With his pop eyes pulsing and his neck tilted obscenely to the side as if it were broken, he looked like a dead fish floating at the top of an aquarium. When not busy clenching his fists or punching towards the lip of the stage, Johnny slithered behind his mike stand, stalking about in an hunch-backed Chuck Berry duck walk and twitching his extended arms at the crowd like a blind beggar trying to reconnoiter past a brick wall.

Rotten didn't sing, he sneered, pouted and railed against the universe. On a song like "No Fun," the Pistols' homage to the Stooges, he groaned and moaned like a corpse from the grave . . .

The Pistol, for their part, despised being cast as *anything*—saviors or villains. They accused the press of being bigger hypesters than themselves. "They're a disease—a bunch of antagonistic, nihilistic, selfish bastards," Johnny complained. "They use us to sell papers and we don't fucking like being used."

Sid Vicious whacked the back of my chair one final time. "If you were British, I'd be bashing you about the room. They're leeches."

Johnny was especially enraged at the way the media sensationalized the Pistols' act. "We're not stars, that's ridiculous," he groaned. "We're in this for total fun. It'll be a good thin if we destroy all the hype an bullshit that rules this fucking music business."

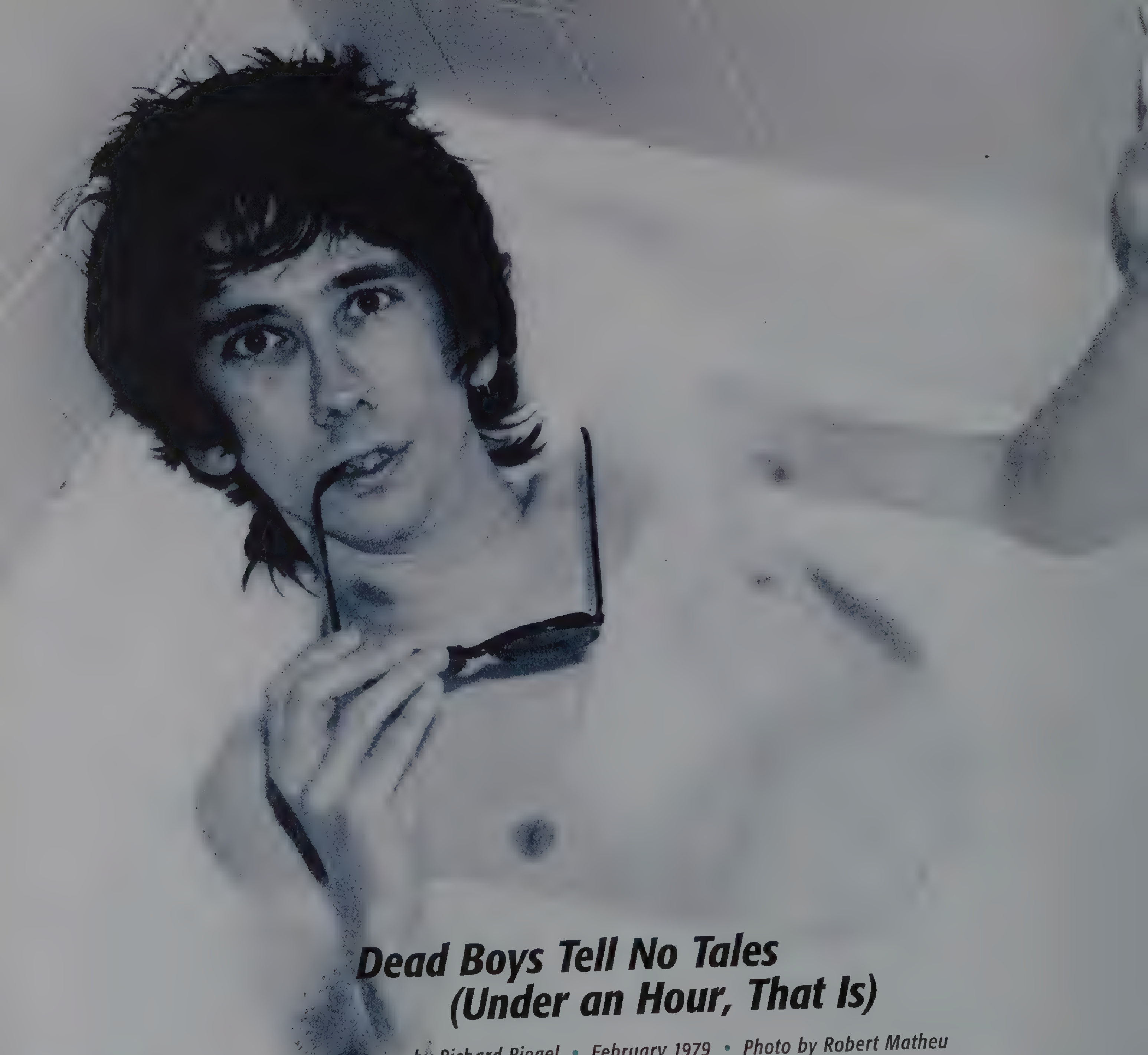
Vicious leaned over and breathed in my face. His breath smelled like the bottom of a garbage can. "Well," he demanded, "did you detect any odor?" I laughed. "Yeah, shit—and lots of it." Sid grinned broadly. "Right—and that's what all the bloody fools in the music world are too."

Johnny banged the table. "We've never even vomited on stage," he said. "It's all a pack of lies. Everybody vomits now and again, but I certainly wouldn't do it as part of a stage act. How third rate!"

He drummed his fingers on the table. "Sometimes I wonder what all the fuss is about," he said, baring a set of teeth that would be at home in an anatomy class. "You know, we're the nicest bunch of guys you'd ever want to meet."

Sid nodded in agreement, aiming another cloud of human monoxide at us. "God!" Johnny grimaced. "You do smell awful!" ■

CREEM



# Dead Boys Tell No Tales (Under an Hour, That Is)

by Richard Riegel • February 1979 • Photo by Robert Matheu

**Five minutes into my first-ever meeting with the Dead Boys, and already I have an angle, a metaphorical hook for my story on the band's scars. The Dead Boys, Cleveland's own incisive contribution to the global village of the New Wave, are into scars. Not that their publicity hadn't promised me as much—Dead Boys fans have reportedly made a practice of etching their heroes' arms with cigarette burns, in punk salute—but when I'm suddenly confronted with the mass of scar tissue that passes as Stiv Bators' upper lip, dangling rather ominously over my Heineken, the surprising reality of the hype hits home.**

**We're dining at an atmospheric place just off Gramercy Park in lower Manhattan, and Sire Records publicist Janis Schacht has just introduced me to Dead Boys Central, to the songwriting, image-making nucleus of the band: vocalist Bators, lead guitarist Cheetah Chrome, and rhythm guitarist Jimmy Zero. Jimmy, sitting at the other end of the table, beneath a giant sailfish stuffed into a comic, frozen leap picks up on the unspoken cue of Bators' scarred lip. "My father," Jimmy announced prophetically, "had a hernia operation in 1951. Whenever we'd go to the beach, he'd show off this big scar on his gut."**

Before Zero can expound on this fascinating bit of evidence that Dead Boyism may indeed be congenital, Cheetah Chrome is ripping open his Cub Scout uniform shirt to reveal a pair of wicked-looking scars in the center of his torso. Cheetah's impromptu strip has snatched him a quick victory in this first round of the disfigurement sweepstakes, but not before I've noted that some of the Dead Boys have fought some pitched battles with ol' Kid Acne over the years, too. Scar bright, first scar I see tonight.

I could go ahead now, and cite the facial and psychic scars of youth as a prime cause of later punk behavior, I could tell you how the Dead Boys' teen years coincided with the pathless void of early '70s rock (the Dead Boys then hopelessly isolated Stooges and MC5 fanatics, beaten by the nuns at school by day, ignored by the Anglophile Cleveland rock establishment at night), but I know that you aware CREEMsters haven't come here for that kind of cheesy adolescent psychology. Besides, with punk rapidly becoming unfashionable with the rock tastemakers, both as a term and as an attitude, the Dead Boys aren't so sure they are punks, at least in the sense the media has been yapping about punks, any longer.

"I've been wearing this dog collar for seven or eight years, ever since I first saw Iggy," says orange-haired Cheetah, fingering his trademark ornament. "Well, not this collar. I lost the first one, but I got another like it." I'm about to suggest that Cheetah add a pet-I.D. tag to his collar to prevent this one from getting away, but Jimmy Zero is also responding to my general question about the future of the Dead boys with the passing of punk: "Well, it's a style. I'm in style in my clothes now, and I'll still be in style two years from now, whatever's going on then."

Jimmy seems uncomfortable with Bob Christgau's recent Consumer Guide description of the Dead Boys as "loveable little scumbags," and perhaps hopes to dress up his ostensible sucmbaginess with some more contemporary threads (check out that de-story reservoir end, and those di-vine pleasure dots!); certainly Jimmy is looking more mod these days than he did in the early publicity photos.

Cheetah Chrome is certain that the Dead Boys will remain intact, whatever happens to punk. "These are my best friends, Stiv & Jimmy & Johnny & Jeff, y'see we stuck together when we came to New York and didn't know no one, and we've stayed together, and we're going to stay together."

Cheetah is functioning as the spokesman, in some bizarre way as the conscience of the Dead Boys tonight, systematically heading off my unasked questions about the rumored breakup of the group. He persistently recounts the band's past image problems, and their continued hope of making records even closer to their live sound: "We Have Come for Your Children just sounded too clean, y'know? I figure we should be self-produced next time, we could say it was produced by the 'Jism Twins,' like the 'Glimmer Twins,' get it? Hey, I can't believe you're from CREEM, you're so normal. You remind me of my cousin back home—no offense—he's a mailman."

"Sure, Cheetah," I toss back. "That's CREEM's secret, employing the most normal writers they can find. Where are you from in Cleveland? "I grew up in the Projects, down at 28th & Detroit," begins Cheetah, but Stiv Bators interrupts with a wiseass, "Yeah, he got suspended from high school for throwing a rake at his horticulture teacher. He only took horticulture 'cause he thought it was the study of hookers!" "Naw," says Cheetah, obviously pleased at this creative revision of the C. Chrome legend, "I quit school right before I finished the 12th grade, I had been goin' to William Dean Howells, and that's like the bottom, y'know, only morons went there . . ."

Down the table, Janis Schacht flashes me a quick smile whenever our eyes meet during Cheetah's monologues, as if to say, "Isn't he just the punkiest? Are you holding up to it OK?" Janis seems to be sitting on the Ramones' needles and pins, half-afraid that the Dead Boys may just decide to live up to her own Sire publicity releases and do something . . . W-E-I-R-D!, something to offend the restaurant personnel and/or the visiting, impressionable rock writer.

As if it's been reading Janis' anxieties, a chair at the vacant table behind us suddenly, mysteriously falls to the floor with a resounding crash, and everybody at our table automatically stares at Cheetah (caught with the meat in your mouth, weren't you, sucker?). I suggest that it was a case of telekinesis, perhaps even projected by a certain dandy at a nearby table, who has already tried to impress his date by inquiring, in a loudly English accent, about the perimeters of the wine list, but Cheetah's all set for the martyr role; whenever the absent-minded waiter passes our table from then on, Cheetah yells out, "I didn't do it!" drawing an appropriately blank look from the beleaguered fellow.

In the hubbub, no one has noticed that Stiv Bators has slipped a bread stick into his fly, and is busily jerking it off, so he has to call our attention to his starchy self-abuse. The joke recognized, Stiv stops well short of orgasm and returns the stick to the bread basket, to await patrons more into oral sex. The table talk buzzes on a bit longer, until, with Bators just concluding an anecdote with " . . . and that was the third time in my life I was in a ménage à trois!", we decided to break up the dinner, so that the Dead Boys will have time to prepare for their appearance at Hurrah later this evening.

Cheetah and I walk over to the nearby apartment he shares with Dead Boy bassist Jeff Magnum and their ladies; Cheetah has found out that I haven't yet heard the Stooges' Kill City LP (not on that mailing list), so he's determined to rectify that glaring omission in my rock critic's education. We walk into the apartment, a tiny two-room place complete with kitchen and bath, and I'm greeted with the overwhelming scent of (black) leather, which is reputed the staff of life among these punks, after all.

These Dead Boy rooms are literally jammed with all the tools of their concentrated lifestyle: the floor and beds are covered with records (Stooges, Flamin' Groovies, Ramones, Dead Boys themselves), well-thumbed copies of CREEM and other worthy rockzines, and with leather garments of various configurations. For all these signs of rockstar glamour, though, every available dresser-top and countertop is covered with the complementary impedimenta of domestic life: hair dryers, bottles of balsam shampoo, crème rinse, protein conditioner, dishwashing detergent, cans of hair spray and roach-killer ("City Strength"). A pair of pink rubber gloves, Devo-style, is draped intriguingly over the sink faucet.

Cheetah takes me on into his own bedroom to meet his beloved lady, Gyda Gash. She rises up on one arm in bed, her yellow-orange hair cascading over the covers, and smiles rather wanly at me; Gyda's left shoulder is heavily bandaged, as she actualized her own adopted Dead Person's surname at Hurrah last night, suffering a nasty gash to her shoulder in some sort of hassle with the Invaders, the Dead Boys' support act. "I'm sitting out there in the waiting room, and I can hear these little animal-like screams—I know my old lady's voice, y'know—and I can tell they're stitching her up," recalls Cheetah, wincing at the fresh pain of the memory.

Gyda's cutting is a little too closely reminiscent tonight of that notorious turning point in the Dead Boys' saga, that early morning incident in the East Village last spring, when Dead Boy drummer Johnny Blitz was stabbed almost to death in a street fight. Blitz recovered to sit behind his drum kit again, thanks in part to the enthusiastic outpouring of funds at last May's Blitz Benefit at CBGB's (organized by Cheetah and Gyda, and emceed by the irrepressible Cheetah), but the Dead Boys hadn't counted on their punk ideals slashing back home to them quite as rapidly as Blitz's stabbing seemed to promise.

We leave the bedroom so Gyda can dress, Cheetah introducing me to a couple more members of the Dead Boy entourage on the way out: "this is 'Ace,'" he says, gesturing toward a guinea pig chirping at us with buck-toothed idiot glee from a glass gerbil-tank on the dresser. "You can see he's got orange hair and a punk haircut like me."

I'm looking at a Wizard of Id comic strip taped to the bedroom door (in the final panel, the King is instructing a giant ape to stone a hapless wrong doer: "Let 'im have it, Cheetah!"), when I notice through the slightly ajar door that the real-life Cheetah Chrome is liberally daubing the armpits of his freshly showered Cleveland Projects body with stick deodorant. "Where does middle-class morality end," I wonder, "and punk liberation begin? Or are they always this inextricably linked?"

Hurrah, for all its haute-punk West Side location, turns out to be in a rather nondescript warehouse (loft?) building; on the directory in the hallway, it's announced simply as "Hurrah 203," as unprepossessingly as all the wholesale knitware outlets sharing the directory. But inside, Hurrah is a long, open room, complete with bar, mirrored walls around the stage, and a large dance floor, already filled with kids discoing to Devo and Patti Smith.

I meet Janis Schacht again, and find her in something of a quandary between her loyalty to Sire, to insuring that this quiet rockwriter from the provinces gets a proper exposure to the Dead Boys, and her desire to rush home and switch on the TV, as no less personages than the Rolling (sigh!) Stones are appearing on Saturday Night Live tonight, at this very moment, in fact! (Live! From New York!) Janis assures me that she and the Stones go way back ("My father could never understand me sitting in front of the TV, crying my eyes out for Brian Jones"), but I avoid confessing to Janis, as I've put off telling the Dead Boys, that I date from the Stones-inspired generation of rockfans too; all I know tonight is that I'm more interested in seeing the live Dead Boys than the reprocessed Stones.

When the Dead Boys and their ladies and their guitar-toting roadies file through the discoing couples, it's strictly 1978 once again; the Dead Boys take the stage, launching into their crunching "Sonic Reducer" theme, and immediately manic pogoers in the center of the floor are shooting high above the crowd, like amphetamine-sped dolphins. Is this the real London-New York punk axis in action, at last?

Cheetah Chrome is bouncing about the stage behind Stiv, Cheetah's slashing guitar licks cutting huge gashes into the amazing adrenalin roar of the Dead Boys' sound; Jimmy Zero stands tall, anchoring the stage with his emerging sex object-appeal, Jeff Magnum provides bass runs with his usual cool authority, and an ever-stronger Johnny Blitz flails away at every square inch of his drum set.

The Dead Boys' songs, especially those from the raw first album, may be brutal and misogynist in content, but their hooks (musical and lyrical) seem tougher and more urgent all the time. In their own, probably half-intentional way, the Dead Boys have become master pop songwriters, assuming that you've adjusted your definition of pop song virtue upward to the realities of the '70s. Dead Boy tunes like "All This And More," "I Won't Look Back," and especially the astounding "Not Anymore" (which captures the cock-in-my-pocket existentialism of workaday despair better than just about anybody else since the original Animals) should be undeniable pop music classics by now, beyond all questions of taste and genre. The Dead Boys are giving all their songs knockout readings tonight.

Stiv Bators has managed to avoid the clawing fans most of the evening, but his Iggy Stooge racial unconsciousness finally gets the best of him, and he takes a header into the stage, cutting a huge chunk out of his chin. Ever the trouper, Stiv rams his fingers into his wound, and daubs bright red blood all over his forehead and cheeks, still shouting out the Dead Boys catalogue all the while. As he finishes the set, Stiv looks like a Plains Indian, all war-primered up to massacre fellow Ohioan George Custer.

When Stiv comes out of the dressing room afterward, he's tight-lipped with pain, and is pressing an ice cube against his rapidly-purpling chin. The crowd has gone back to dancing to the latest discs, with the mind-controlling DJ now spinning the Stones' "Miss You" and Devo's "Mongoloid" album cuts at 45 rpm, just enough out of rhythmic sync to work wonders on your central nervous system.

Jimmy and Johnny and I catch a cab back to CBGB's, to end the evening on a more organically Dead Boy note, and in the taxi, a philosophical Johnny Blitz gives me his good word for the story: "You see those cunts just standing there, see in their eyes how much they want you, and sometimes you just can't stand it anymore. After all that time thinking that was just what you wanted." Right, Johnny, no doubt that's true, just don't write any songs about it; reflecting on the wages of fame is the death of any good rock 'n' roll band.

Down at CBGB's, it's going on 4 a.m., but the Erasers are still going strong, and so is the indefatigable Cheetah Chrome, who's determined that I get my money's worth of an interview with the band. Despite his exhausting workout at Hurrah, Cheetah's still ready to pursue the rock biz; he thrusts one more beer into my hand, and starts discussing possible producers for the Dead Boys' next album. He wants my expert rock critic's opinion, but I'm too tired, and too drunk, and the Erasers are too loud, for me to think coherently any longer. I apologize to Cheetah and head back to my hotel.

It's daylight again, and I'm having a slightly hungover breakfast at a little coffee shop on 3rd Avenue. The guy at the other end of the counter, who for an unexplained reason strikes me as a French leftist radical of 1968 vintage, suddenly snarls out, "Bah! I want milk for my cereal!" and throws the sugar shaker to a shattering crash on the floor. The proprietors stand shuffling their feet, staring shamefacedly at the glass shards and spilled sugar, uncertain just how much outrage they can admit to this potential psycho killer at the counter. The harried Arab waiter becomes even more deferential, rushing to bring a glass of milk to his demanding customer. Nobody dares sweep up the wrecked sugar shaker until after the quasi-Frenchman has deposited his quarter tip and has left the restaurant. A punk is a punk is a punk, I remind myself one more time.

Later I trek over to W. 23rd St., to the Chelsea Hotel, the home of Jimmy Zero and Stiv Bators when they're in New York. I walk into the historic Chelsea lobby, rich in literary associations, including novelist Thomas Wolfe, whom I idolized in my adolescence the way the Dead Boys worshiped Iggy Stooge in theirs. Wolfe was involved in some noteworthy literary brawls, and died young, but otherwise didn't indulge too much in the punk ethic back in the lean days of his 1930s.

Upstairs, Jimmy and Stiv, and the visiting Cynthia of Toronto's "B" Girls new wave power trio, are watching an old Burt Lancaster Western frequently interspersed with discount floor covering commercials. Cheetah and Gyda didn't make it all the way home last night, and are still lying passed out in the other bed, here at the Dead Boys' Chelsea digs. Gyda's swirl of orange hair sticks out of one end of the blanket, and her stiletto-heeled black boot out the other.

When Cheetah notices that I'm back, he bounces out of bed, still clad in his cheetah tights, and is ready to be interviewed all over again. "Are you sure you're going to remember all this?" he asks me, eyeing my suspicious lack of a tape recorder. "I can't believe CREEM is doing a real-live feature on us."

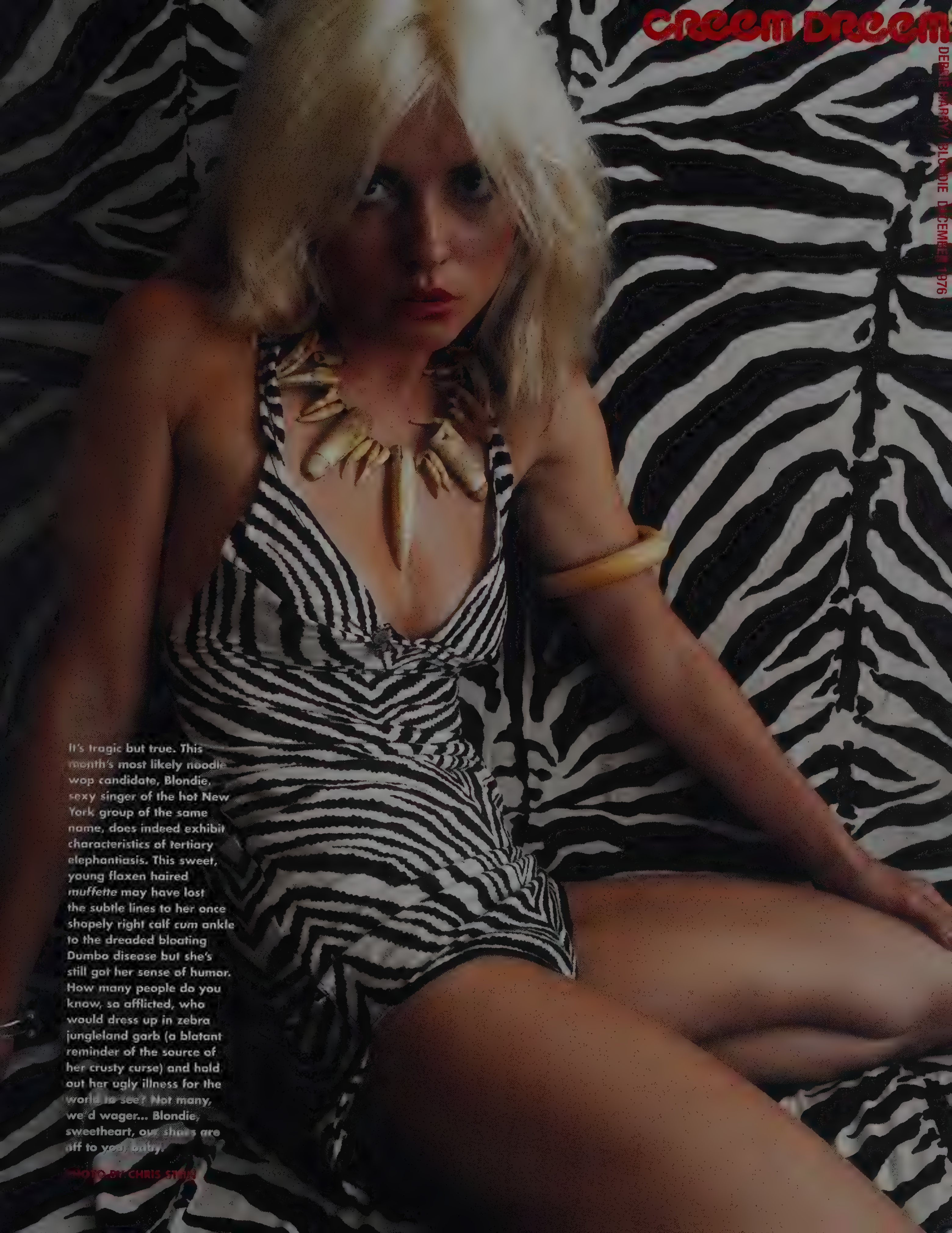
"How about a story angle that 'the Dead boys are the new Beatles?'" I ask, hoping to give the Dead Boys some encouragement to continue putting out their great pop songs. Jimmy and Stiv find my hyperbole a bit excessive, and I have to admit that I actually regard the Ramones as the Beatles of the '70s (for those with ears to hear) after all, but that the Dead Boys are certainly right up there with the Gabba Four.

"Oh, yeah," says Cheetah, when the talk has swung back to the Dead Boys' punk competitors, "I wanta get it on the record that we don't have no quarrel with Sid Vicious, we get along OK with him."

Sid Vicious didn't have any quarrel with his fellow scar-connoisseurs in the Dead Boys, for sure, but somebody must've crossed him, as a few days after I got home from my Dead Boys trip, I read in the papers that Sid Vicious has been arrested and charged with stabbing his girlfriend in the Chelsea Hotel, no less. Poor Sid, he shoulda taken up horticulture when he had the chance. ■

# CREEM DREEM

DEBBIE HARRY / BLONDIE DECEMBER 1976



It's tragic but true. This month's most likely noodle wop candidate, Blondie, sexy singer of the hot New York group of the same name, does indeed exhibit characteristics of tertiary elephantiasis. This sweet, young flaxen haired *muffette* may have lost the subtle lines to her once shapely right calf *cum* ankle to the dreaded bloating Dumbo disease but she's still got her sense of humor. How many people do you know, so afflicted, who would dress up in zebra jungleland garb (a blatant reminder of the source of her crusty curse) and hold out her ugly illness for the world to see? Not many, we'd wager... Blondie, sweetheart, our shades are off to you, baby.

PHOTO BY CHRIS STEIN

# RASHCLASH MASHINMOTOR CITYBASH

**by Dave DiMartino • December 1979**
**Photos by Robert Matheu**

Joe Strummer and I are sitting in a bar, talking about his band. I ask him about "I Fought the Law" and its relatively unexpected success on American radio. Doesn't he think it odd that the one song promising to break the Clash in America is a tune he didn't even write?

Joe shakes his head in disgust, something he's been doing quite a bit of. "It just goes to show ya, ya know?" he says.

"I'd just like to say this: America, how is it we make *twenty-nine* brilliant records and you won't give us a drop of airplay—and we make one *shitty* one and you lap it up. How is it? Tell me . . ."

Howard Johnson has a lot more going for him than HoJo cola. His hotels, for instance. Right in the middle of beautiful downtown Detroit sits a real *beauty* of a scrap-heap, the kind of mammoth, overgrown monstrosity that only the Motor City or any other dying metropolis can provide. Vertical, not horizontal, it shoots upward and leaves little room for people to walk about comfortably. The ceiling of each floor's hallway hangs down ominously, threatening the safe passage of anybody over six feet tall and adding even more to the already pervasive, claustrophobic atmosphere. The view outside—cars and busses streaming in every direction, city construction men attempting to beautify what can't be beautiful with their jackhammers and sledges—it all says more about Detroit than any chamber of commerce ever could. [*Ah, go back to Miami, wetback. – Ed.*]

In the lobby, we sit waiting for the Clash's bus to take us to an afternoon soundcheck at the nearby Masonic Temple, tonight's venue. A well-dressed, fifty-ish man sticks some change into a lobby vending machine as we wait and pulls out a fresh new copy of the latest *Penthouse* magazine. Outside, a weary-looking black man, old and hunched over, sticks his arm deep into a city garbage can and pulls out a prize—an empty Stroh's bottle that some unknowing tourist didn't realize was worth five cents. He sticks it into his half-full burlap sack, throws the sack over his shoulder, and walks on, halfway to his own bottle or halfway to his own copy of *Penthouse*. Who cares? Welcome to Detroit.

## WECLIMBONTHEBUS.

**Mick, had you any preconceptions about what America would be like before you come here?**

**Mick Jones:** Yeah, plenty.

**And?**

**Mick Jones:** Most of my preconceptions were absolutely true.

**Like?**

**Mick Jones:** Everything's bigger here. And the food tastes twice as bland. Like the tomatoes, for instance—they're so big, but they don't taste like anything. Everything's been given a shot of something. It doesn't seem quite *real*.

**How about you, Paul? Any preconceptions about your Detroit audience?**

**Paul Simonon:** I dunno. Only that they must all have *cars* or something.

Detroit is the Clash's fourth stop on this, their second American tour. They began at Monterey—an ex-hippie's failed attempt at recreating the '60s festival and a total financial washout—and reportedly went down a storm, pulling in encore after encore. They've hit Minneapolis, Chicago a night ago, and tomorrow they're on their way to Boston. They have a way to go yet, and they want to make sure everything will be running smoothly for tonight's Detroit show.

At the Masonic Temple, the equipment is already set up. The band goes through several numbers, extending them, obviously less concerned with tightness and more concerned with sound quality. *Everything* sounds good—the system, the players, the monitor system they weren't quite sure about—and another part of the band, the less disciplined, more adventurous part, surfaces. They have no one to impress but themselves, and they sound terrific. They ought to do more things like this. In public.

Clash bassist Paul Simonon is upstairs relaxing in a Masonic Temple dressing room. The soundcheck is over, and Simonon sits talking to the most spectacularly *beautiful* girl I've ever seen.

*Some questions about the band's new album. The one you just recorded, OK? What were you looking for when you asked Guy Stevens to produce it?*

"Madness," Simonon says. "And we found it."

**How so?**

"Well—he's just *loony*." Simonon points down at the tape recorder. "Like he'd pick this up and just throw it somewhere, ya know? He wouldn't care." A smile creeps up on his face. "Like we had this big piano in the studio, right? He poured beer all over it. Once everybody was getting ready to watch Marilyn Monroe films on the telly, right? He started crying. He walked over to the telly, hugged it and then poured beer all over it. And then it blew up. So we didn't do much telly watching while we were recording."

Simonon is extremely happy with the new album, as is the rest of the band. Sandy Pearlman's production efforts on *Give 'Em Enough Rope*, its predecessor, seem to have left no small impression.

"I'm not as pleased with the second album as I'd like to be," Simonon says. "I dunno . . . it's just like . . . " He pauses. "It doesn't seem *loose* enough, that's all. Seems a bit uptight."

Mick Jones, who's just walked into the room, is even harsher. The new album, recorded within two months, slam-bang, in and out of the studio, seems the total antithesis of the carefully measured, laboriously drawn-out Pearlman affair.

"I didn't realize the significance of how quickly it was done until people kept bringing it up," says Jones of the new LP. "That's only because all the records over *here* take nine years to do. And believe me—the big production, the last one—we've done it, we've done it the American way, and it *don't* work, and it's a load a shit. So we've done it the English way now and we've got *two* albums instead of one. And it's all much better. Guy Stevens is probably the best English producer of the last two decades."

"Definitely," says Simonon.

In the Howard Johnson's bar, Joe Strummer is methodically removing ice cubes from the mixture of orange juice, grenadine and tequila that makes up his Tequila Sunrise. He's putting them in the ashtray that sits on the table between us, talking about America to yet another anonymous American. He's also talking about business.

"Clash will one day sell *millions* of records in America," he says. "But in the 1990s."

**You plan to stay together that long?**

"No," he grins. "It'll be like on TV, ya know? *Thirty Hits from the Temptations*, *Twenty-two Highballin' Truckers' Hits*. It'll be one of those. *Thirty-nine Greats from Old England* or *Remember the Seventies*. Yeah, they'll buy all *that* shit—and now, when we need the dough, need it to keep going, we're gonna get the two fingers. But that's how you *like* it over here, don't you? Repackaged nostalgia."

Again, Strummer looks disgusted.

"I saw a fuckin' Jackie Wilson record on sale on the telly, right? And Jackie Wilson's lyin' *sick 'n half dead* in a New York hospital, but they're still floggin' it. I bet Jackie Wilson don't see none of the $9.99 that goes for *that*."

**So what do you think of American audiences so far??**

**Mick Jones:** "Well, they're pretty receptive, at least on some levels. They seem to listen, they seem to be aware. I mean—it's not like it's made out, it's not like they're all dummies or something. No, the people that come to our concerts seem to be pretty *alive*."

**What exactly are you talking about? ?**

"The *mass* American audience that goes to see all the heavy metal groups and drop quaaludes and throw firecrackers? Man, if *that's* representative of America then you know you're in shit as well as I do . . . "

Joe Strummer is still back at the bar, talking about business, while a nearby cocktail pianist plays Barry Manilow's "Daybreak." It's an interesting scene.

It's also been fascinating watching Strummer speak. At first, he makes absolutely no eye contact with me—making it painfully obvious that a) he's only speaking with me because he feels he *should*, and b) personally, he doesn't like me in the least. But as he warms up to the subject—record company screw-ups, *American* screw-ups—he looks me straight in the eye. He's talking advice now, advice to newer bands who've seen the Clash grow and become what they now are. He's talking about traps on the wayside for new, younger bands, unavoidable corporate politics that might be avoided. *Maybe*.

"I'd say that there are several smart things you can do," says Joe. "Number one—set up your own business operation before you start, so that—Number two—you can peg your own prices. And I'd say, speaking personally, that it's a bit of a wind-up to get with a major label. You never make a *penny* out of it, as far as I can see."

**How would you have done things differently??**

"I would have set up my own operation, for a start. You know, my own company, my own publishing, I'd set it up all our own. Maybe we couldn't in those days, maybe if we did we wouldn't still be here. I dunno—but if I had a chance to go back and do it again, that's one thing I'd change, I think. 'Cause the understanding is virtually nil, and you always are pulling in the opposite direction. Ya know, we pull pretty *hard*, but we face a battery of 60 lawyers. When we try to get the price down on one of our things we face a battery of 60 lawyers all pullin' the other way. I just see it as a waste of spirit and effort and time. I think maybe if we got free we'd try to do something like *that*."

**Can you get free? What're the terms of your contract??**

"It's a 99-year deal with 18 tracks a year. Same sorta contracts like the ones they give at Sing-Sing."

The bill tonight features not only the Clash but the Undertones, a very young, very talented outfit from Ireland whose debut LP should be out here soon on Sire Records. More than likely, few in the Detroit audience will have ever seen or heard the band before.

Not so with David Johansen. Johansen is to follow the Undertones, and Detroit is very much a New York Dolls stronghold. Johnny Thunders' recent local gigs with former MC5 guitarist Wayne Kramer seem to have rekindled interest in what the Dolls have wrought. Detroit is *very* anxious to see David Johansen.

**Have the things the band sung about on the first LP changed much since the record was made??**

**Paul Simonon:** "No, I think those songs still ring pretty true. Probably more so, now. Like "Career Opportunities"—we wrote it a couple of years ago, but the situation about getting jobs is worse, and it's *getting* worse. Since Margaret Thatcher's come in it, I dunno, things aren't as easy for poor people. Or young people."

Back in the bar again. Joe's half-finished his drink and I'm on maybe the sixth or seventh beer of what's become a very *long* day, asking if Joe thinks his experiences will ultimately be of any value to anyone but himself.

"At least some buncha jerks will read this article," he scowls, "if you're ever gonna *write* it, that is, and, I dunno, may be it'll help 'em a little, maybe it won't.

"Actually, I'd *like* to think that I've done all that for a good purpose. So you can pass on a message, so all that bollockin' around wouldn't have been in vain. But secretly I have to believe that you cannot tell one person *anything*—I can't tell you anything, can't give you no advice, 'cause you won't believe me until it happens to you. Not you personally, but to everybody.

"I mean it's vice-versa, too, 'cause I heard things like 'don't sign anything.' Keith Richards, for instance, he did an interview five years ago. 'Don't sign anything, kids,' he said. I read that, ya know, thousands of others like me read it—but I *signed* the fuckin' thing. So I'm not sure. Only *now* I know, 'cause I *been* ripped, *now* I know 'don't sign anything,' but I had to be ripped to get here. Even though I read that before. So I'm not sure that what we're sayin' can really help anybody. Not until you've really been in it yourself—done in, done over.

"That's why I don't mind bein' done over—'cause I know that I'm learning something. Slowly."

**Do you think you might be able to remove yourself from the situation??**

"Lissen," says Joe, "I'm in a situation where I couldn't even go into a drug store and get myself a hamburger. So I'm not in any situation I can get myself out of."

I manage to make it to the Masonic Temple shortly after the Undertones' set, which apparently met mixed reactions. Barry Meyer, also with the Clash on their debut U.S. tour, is back again between sets spinning 45's and having a great time. The Detroit audience seems especially feisty, here to witness a headlining band they've heard on record, read a lot about, but never actually *seen* in person. When David Johansen emerges onstage, cheers are heard—but there's a tacit understanding between the performer and the audience. He's not the headliner, it's not really his show, and what happens next is essentially Johansen's own making.

In short: Johansen is superb. Three encores, Mitch Ryder and Four Tops tunes, even "Personality Crisis." The audience loves it, totally behind Johansen, totally behind his surprisingly magnetic stage appeal. Fists raised in the air after his third encore, he shouts "DETROIT!!!" into the microphone and the audience shouts just as loudly.

And the Clash are next.

A final trip back to the bar. Joe Strummer is getting ready to leave, I've got yet another beer and the day's third pack of Merit Menthols, a new record. I want to talk about Joe's record company problems.

**Joe, you've been saying that you've been done in and screwed over and taken advantage of. What exactly is the deal? What do you have to do that's so terrible? What exactly is the obligation to CBS that's so unfair you can't even get a hamburger at a drugstore?**

"How do ya mean 'obligation'?"

**I mean what do you have to give 'em before you're a free man?**

"Preferably they don't want us to *die* . . . "

**Yeah, right, but you said it's a long-term contract. How long??**

"Ninety-nine years. It's a new kind of contract they've come out with to make sure you don't get away . . . "

**Yeah, right. Ha ha.**

"Look," says Joe, glaring at me one final time. "All I'm trying to tell you is *why the fuck should I tell you about my personal business deals*? You asked me about my contract and I tell you it's 99 years, right? If you had any fuckin' *tact* you'd fuckin' say it was a long one and leave it at that, right? But *no*, you gotta come back and drivel on about it, 'how many albums is it' and all that. These personal business deals are *my* business and *not yours*, and not all your readers, right? I said we got a long contract and we gotta come out with a load of stuff every year, and if you wanna get the fuckin' *precise details*, take a lawyer, go up to West 52nd Street, go up to the 21st floor and start *there*! And by the time you get to the 99th floor you'll find out!!"

**Uhh . . . sorry, Joe. You're just making it sound like you don't have any kind of control at all. I mean, you must have some kind of artistic control, right?**

"No! We're gonna give *that* up as well! We decided it's better—not only is CBS gonna *sell* the records, we decided it's better if they *make* 'em, too!! You know, it's better if we just stay in *Hawaii* or somewhere like that. Maybe we could do one or two photo sessions and let CBS handle the whole thing!!"

**Right, Joe. Yeah. Sorry if I offended you and all that—?**

Look," he says, getting up out of his chair, "I gotta do a show in a minute and you're *smokin' cigarettes* and *blowin' the smoke in my face an' askin' me questions an'* CLICK!!!"

At this point the tape recorder shuts off. Mainly because Joe pounds on it with his fists.

### LIFEISGREAT.

The Clash open their set with a new tune, a reggae-based thing few people seem familiar with. But as soon as Mick Jones breaks into "I'm So Bored With The U.S.A.," the stage is rushed and the audience is screaming. Things are working as planned: Detroit loves the Clash, the band is tight, and everything each audience member has read and heard about the band is confirmed. And more so.

Until: Joe Strummer starts having problems with his guitar and kicks over his amplifier. Then the band plays "English Civil War" with Mick Jones bringing out an acoustic guitar and strumming while Simonon and drummer Topper Headon play on obliviously. And whatever momentum the Clash has achieved at this point halts altogether. A few unavoidable Detroit "BOOO"s are heard and things are never the same again.

Strummer grabs a microphone and yells, "In England when they don't like us they throw bottles at us!" Then Paul Simonon sings his new number—another reggae-based thing, already recorded for the new LP—and at the song's conclusion, a bottle is hurled onstage, followed by a few paper airplanes and a persistent, unrelenting chorus of booing, mixed with applause, that seems to set the band's nerve on edge.

No matter. Mick Jones' guitar playing isn't affected in the least. He easily stands out, at least on this night, as the band's most capable musician. Topper Headon and Paul Simonon have few problems, and Joe Strummer's voice, despite the cigarette smoke, holds out just fine—but it's plainly Mick Jones' night. Even if no one in the audience seems to realize it.

The band returns for an encore, halfheartedly, and as they finish 'Career Opportunities' Strummer grabs the microphone and screams "WHAT DO YOU WANT US TO PLAY NEXT?" Of course, they don't return.

As the audience files out of the hall, one angry Clash fan—now, apparently, an ex-fan—screams "The Clash is Dead!!" And maybe a few people believe him, maybe a few people don't.

### THISTIMEIDON'TGET BACKONTHEBUS. ■

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")

ROBERT MATHEU

## THE CLASH

**HOME:** European—yes, safe—no.

**AGE:** Old enough to go to the dentist, young enough not to care.

**PROFESSION:** Agents provocateurs.

**HOBBIES:** Smashing tape recorders, interpreting the U.S. for interested English art school students; paramilitary maneuvers; reading Margaret Drabble; creating cigarette smoke-free environments; birth control counseling; throwing the proverbial spanner into the works and living to sing about it.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *Family Planning Perspectives* by I. Reed Enemy.

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Convincing the American public that they have indeed come for their promotion men, and it will do them a world of good.

**QUOTE:** "My name is Eraserhead, and I can rub you out!"

**PROFILE:** Gnawing at rock's soft underside like a crazed pack of rhythm buzzards; The Clash first started blitzkrieging the jaded tastes of the undead in the glory days of 1977 and haven't gotten fat yet; having torn the '70s apart, the last gang in town proceeds to rebuild the battered fuselage of the '80s with intelligence, style and nice shirts.

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

BOY HOWDY!
Creem

***Authentic*** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

BOY HOWDY! ™

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**

# A Creem Editor Remembers

Twenty-seven years after writing the following article, I maintain my innocence. I did *not* steal Iggy's cigarettes.

I told Dave DiMartino I didn't want to interview Iggy. Dave wasn't going for it. He knew I only liked the first three Stooges albums, and bits of *The Idiot* and *Lust For Life*. I'd been imbued with the spirit of the band since 1969, only 12 years old when baptized into the Church of Iggy. The Stooges were omnipresent in those days, playing every high school dance and ice rink in the metro Detroit area—a fact I patiently explained to Bob Geldof on Thanksgiving Day 2004 in Rome when he, my wife Dawn Gifford Engle and I were co-recipients of Mikhail Gorbachev's Man for Peace Award. But that's another story, kids, which will have to wait for another day, a day when I don't have more important things to do, like explain my reticence to interview The Pop.

First time I saw the Stooges was in 1970. There are a million Stooges horror stories in the naked city, and I saw about two dozen of 'em. And each time I saw the band, it hurt more. Every show was a psychic train wreck. Iggy and band hoisted their weenies onto the chopping block that is Art every time they played. Somehow, the band managed to channel every negative aspect of Detroit life into their performances, and it's no small wonder the Stooges had little success outside the region. You can blow all the smoke you want about their gigs at Max's Kansas City, or in L.A., but their killing floor was my backyard and I was slaughtered every time they played. There will always be the Stooges alleged last stand at the Michigan Palace which was taped by some guy which eventually emerged as *Metallic KO*, but I was there both nights, and The Ramrods' guitarist Dave Hanna has a better tape of those nights. And my memory is better, more bitter and biting than your nostalgia. So fuck you.

. . . I remember bumping into kids from other places, they'd ask where I was from, I told them, they'd ask, "You seen those Stooges?" Well fuck yeah I seen the Stooges. Then they'd bore me with tales of seeing Jethro Tull or the Grateful Fucking Dead, or some other band that should have been arrested for loitering on a stage, never mind their shitty marijuana. I've always preferred industrial sludge to unicorns and rainbows, fer chrissakes. The Stooges made me feel so very hurt, and so very hopeful.

What was I saying?

Oh yeah. DiMartino, who received a degree in psychology, gave me a ton of shit about not wanting to interview Iggy. Ian Curtis had just hung himself, and Sid Vicious . . . well, Sid *knew*. CREEM publisher Barry Kramer was still alive and annoying. Dave wouldn't let me walk from the assignment, finally screaming at me, "OK purist asshole! Like only the first three Stooges albums! Know how much pain Iggy was in when he made those? You just want him to die, you sick dog? Stop it! Interview him!"

So Dave pushed me into the driver's seat of my 1969 Olds Delta 88. He pushed me up to will call, Dave pushed me into my seat, he was always—always—behind me. We ate White Castles and cadged drinks, 'cos we had no money.

The super-8 film I shot of the show was taken by Iggy's road manager Dennis, who was suffering from Severe Penile Absence. He probably sold it on eBay last week. I hope he died of syphilis of what passes for his brain. And I hope it was really, horribly, painful. So I did the following interview, and here is how it was.

A couple of weeks after the issue came out, I was sitting in Barry Kramer's office snorting cocaine, drinking cognac and beer. The phone rang, and Barry picked it up, as it was after midnight. Barry grunted, "Yeah, uh huh . . . yeah, hang on, I'll get him," and then handed me the phone. It was Lester Bangs, who went on to berate me for the blow-job-in-print he said I wrote. Said I should've put the hatchet between Iggy's shoulder blades, what was I some wimp, that I wasn't the teenager who ran up to him at Lou Reed's *Sally Can't Dance* tour show and recited his review back to him then ran away hysterically laughing, that I'd lost my balls and heart to ugly charm . . . and then I did what anyone would do. I calmly said, "Shut the fuck up," and dropped the receiver into the cradle, my last words to Lester.

I don't regret it, either. When you start worrying about what rock critics say to you or about you, you're just lost, or worse. Obviously, Iggy and the Stooges didn't listen, either. Lester is dead, so's Barry. So who's smarter?

Iggy Pop has persevered, won in the late innings, despite Lester Bangs, and all the "great" critics. And me. And you.

*—Ivan Suvanjieff*
*the Artist Formerly Known as Mark J. Norton*

# IGGY POP: SOLDIER OF THE DOG CHOW APOCALYPSE

**by Mark J. Norton • June 1980**
**Photos by Robert Matheu**

You know of this person. He's the guy who made heavy metal groups look like the wimps they are with his first three albums, *The Stooges*, *Funhouse* and *Raw Power*. He's the guy with the big eyes, the lean, muscular body, the wild stage act that no one could follow, or want to. This is the person whose career has been up and down so many times you wondered when it was going to peak or bottom out, knowing whatever the outcome, it would indeed be spectacular. Or something.

This is the guy who is a very close friend of David Bowie. This is the person who ran away from Nico. This is the human being of myth and legend, the guy who inspires otherwise sane people to reduce themselves to slobbering fools. Or worse.

What is it that makes them turn into rabid dogs, baying drunkenly at the moon? What is it that makes them arm themselves with eggs/bottles/cans/whatever to throw at a performer who just wants to show his audience a *real cool time*? His fans are numerous as his foes. Why?

Well, it might just be his unorthodox live presentation of rock 'n' roll. He twists, jerks, dances around on stage like a maniac, the epitome of infantilism, which has become his trademark. He did, at times, dive into the audience, take on bike gangs, insult everyone—but who promised you a rose garden? *Certainly* not Iggy. Like he said, "You paid five bucks and I'm making ten thousand, so *screw ya*!"

. . . Anyway, the day had come for Iggy to play Detroit again. I was secretly reluctant to attend the show. I had the job of interviewing him, so of course I *had* to be there.

Iggy and his group played the first night at a large suburban hall called the Center Stage, in Canton, Michigan. Accompanying me was the Legendary Dave DiMartino. We found a little table off to the side of the stage near the back of the theatre, and sat down, bellies stuffed from the White Castle burgers we had ingested minutes before. Neither of us had enough money to buy beer, so we sat there like a couple of dopes hoping for someone with a fat wallet to sit down and buy us drinks. Good luck.

*There's the whole thing of the smart-ass, smart alec CREEM wit. I always wondered if it was a defense. I always wondered if you were all a little more naïve—as I certainly was—than the coastal people who were really approaching rock 'n' roll from the publishing industry and tend to be really cynical. Where, as a kid from the Midwest, you're still excited about it and then once you get into the game, you start getting disappointed. You hit disappointments and you hit certain realities. I always wondered if humor was the only acceptable, entertaining way to deflect that attitude. For whatever reason, it was a pretty witty read. It was pretty funny, that magazine.*

*—Iggy Pop*

The place filled up quickly, Iggy-fever running rampant. Screams of "IGGY!" and "I WANNA BE YOUR DOOOOOGGGG!" filled the smoky air. It was like a zoo, with the animals escaping for the night, to bawl and howl and run amuck. Fun, fun, fun . . .

. . . On comes the Pop and a new unrecorded tune "Hassles," and the group he's assembled sounds tighter and more efficient that I've ever heard before.

The set was building a momentum I haven't heard since the March '73 *Raw Power* tour. The audience is frothing at the mouth, likewise the author of this article. I'd been ready to dismiss Iggy, but this group (yeah, it sounded like a *group*, instead of a bunch of jacks paid to play, like the Ig had been dragging around since post-*Raw Power*. Thank the good Lord, or Ivan Kral, who put this group together for Iggy.) restored my faith. Iggy was more professional than he had ever been before, his stage moves more like a ballet than epileptic convulsions.

Something must be said about Iggy's stage movements. During a song, he'll stand perfectly still, only his shoulders and arms gesturing. Suddenly, he seems to become possessed, twitching from one side of the stage to the other, as if someone had just dumped a truckload of fleas down his pants. Maybe it's a sudden burst of adrenalin, maybe he just gets bored standing still. No big deal, of course, but it's strange . . .

. . . The show was over. It was perhaps the finest rock 'n' roll performance I'd seen in months. The only comparable concert was the one that followed the night after at the Motor City Roller Rink, when Iggy and group tore through like it was the last show, the end of the earth. I was a fan again, and damn proud of it.

We adjourned to the backstage area. I was apprehensive about the interview—the Arista publicist had said the day before that Iggy had absolutely no desire to talk to any form of the press, but he would grant CREEM a short visit with him.

**IGGY:** You must be Mark. C'mon in, sit yourself down and relax. Ya need something to drink? My name is Jim, and this is my family. [sweeps an arm around the room; I sit in front of him, and thus proceed.]

**CREEM:** You played an amazing . . .
**IGGY:** Thank you. [hands me a beer] If you weren't amazed, I'd be disappointed. Your last name is . . .

**CREEM:** Norton, like the motorcycle.
**IGGY:** My last name is Osterberg, I think you know Kral. Have you met Ivan?

**CREEM:** Yeah, he was in a movie I made called *Face The '80s* . . .
**KRAL:** Yeah, you did the Super-8, right? Yeah! That's right!
**IGGY:** All my other friends in this room are named "Moon" [laughs].

**CREEM:** You're looking pretty healthy . . .
**IGGY:** You're looking good yourself, Mark, you seem to be all there [grabs the calf of my leg] yourself. I don't think there's much percentage in bad health; now that we're into space shuttles and things, how would I withstand the atmospheric pressure when I wanna leave town for Mars or something?

**CREEM:** What do you do to keep in shape?
**IGGY:** Absolutely nothing! The key to my survival is that since I was 18 years old and actually decided to do it full time, I've had *one* discipline that I give everything to, and that's ROCK. I care little or nothing about anything else and I wouldn't *dream* of running around the block. *Rock* does it all for me. [to person guarding the door] What are you keeping out of here? Are there any white girls? Yeah, bring some in . . . nah, let 'em wait. Ya got a cigarette? Hope it's not menthol.

**CREEM:** No, it's non-mentholated for me. [I give him a Vantage]
**IGGY:** *Yeeech!* Who's got a Marlboro?

**CREEM:** Look, ah . . . I don't intend on dwelling on your past because you just played a phenomenal set, all post-*Raw Power* material . . .
**IGGY:** What was it, Mark, that you liked best, hey! *Mark thought it was an amazing show!* What was it you liked best and oh! not to forget, come here, Michael. You gotta meet the joy of my life, Mark. [Michael sits down] This is Michael Page and this is Mark, boy journalist. I met Michael when he was mowing lawns in LaJolla, California seven years ago and he said, "Jim, I'm going to be in the music business," and I said, "Ahhhhhhh." But he was a workaholic and I just hired him. Unbeknownst to me, the other guys do these things for me, I'm not much of a musician. They hired him, and you can take the boy out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the boy. Michael's just done an African tour with Chubby Checker. Michael's one of the most unusual men I've ever met. I call Michael and the drummer Rocky and Bullwinkle, (changes voice to an old ladies voice) *cuz the drummer's so little and so young*, (changes voice to sonorous boom) *and the bass player's sooo big*. Michael is a *love figure*. I mean we had sex symbols in the '70s. In the '80s, if there is to be a love figure in my life, it's Michael Page.
**MICHAEL:** I am replacing Ben Orr of The Cars.

**CREEM:** You weren't negative at all tonight, yet people persist in throwing things at you. How do you feel about that?
**IGGY:** Yeah, I did have one problem, I got hit in the face with a quart of something when the lights were off hahahahaha. But no, you're right, I didn't have a negative—HELLO! [shouts to someone entering the room]

**CREEM:** Right, You didn't have a negative attitude, and people throw things. Does this bother you at all?
**IGGY:** No, it can't anymore because I'm working with an *American* band, and these guys are so fucking great they keep me laughing 24 hours a day, out of my mind. I haven't been so happy since the original edition of the Stooges before I included the creeps. The original—Ron, Scott, Dave and myself.

**CREEM:** The creeps were . . .
**IGGY:** The rest of them after that, most of them *died*. But even the Stooges didn't measure up to these guys and that's why I was able to overcome that tonight because I've got the strength of my band. I grew tired of having a Chinese drummer with a German bass player with a Transylvanian something. We're All-American. Ivan's as American as they come.

**CREEM:** [singing] God bless America . . .
**EVERYONE PRESENT:** GODDAMN RIGHT!!!!!

**CREEM:** You've used a lot of movie titles for song titles like "China Girl" and "Lust For Life". . .
**IGGY:** NO, NO, NO, hold on a second. Is "China Girl" a movie?

**CREEM:** Yes . . .
**IGGY:** I didn't know that. I had an experience with a young Vietnamese woman who was the first girl in a couple of years that would screw me. I was unemployed and I wasn't looking so good, you see. [half singing] They always want you when you're up and they always hate you when you're down. And that's why I wrote that. I didn't know that was a movie, and "Lust For Life" I took from the book, I didn't know there was a movie by the same title either. "Winter Of Discontent" [an unrecorded song by Iggy] is from Shakespeare. You some kind of movie buff?

**CREEM:** Yeah, my favorite movie is *101 Dalmatians*.
**IGGY:** [regains composure] The reasons I make that distinction is because I use literature, I use literary titles more than movies. I'm not a big movie fan. Paramount called me last week, I guess they want me to do a movie. Aaron Russo called me . . . SCOTT! [Scott Asheton enters the room]

**CREEM:** I understand you are looking for a place to live in the South . . .
**IGGY:** Yeah, New Orleans.

**CREEM:** Are you going to keep a place in Berlin?
**IGGY:** No, I'm giving it up now. There's too fucking many artists. No, it's infested now with youth cul-

# CREEM DREEM

DIVINE MAY 1981

"My feelings are hurt!" sniffed Divine. "You dopes *adored* me in *Pink Flamingos,* hailed me as 'the new Garbo' in *Female Trouble,* and you'll positively *drool* over me in my new film *Polyester.* But did you jerks invite me to be the CREEM DREEM!?! *Noooo!!* You were too busy with Grace Jones, Nina Hagen, Siouxsie Sioux and that twit David Lee Roth! My day has come—I'm the World's Most Beautiful Woman! And as your new Queen, I can *do and say* and *have* anything I want!

"Now on your knees, readers . . . and *crawl forward!*"

PHOTO BY ROBYN BEECHE

ture and artists. The modern world has arrived in Berlin and that's why I left. I left America in the first place to get away from the '70s.

**CREEM:** What did you see in New Orleans that impressed you so much?

**IGGY:** There are parts of New Orleans that are as cut off from reality as anywhere you can imagine. That's where I prefer to be for my writing. I like to be somewhere where nothing's happening.

**CREEM:** Seeing as you titled your new album *Soldier*, and it contains a line "I'm too damn old to join the military service," I was just wondering, how did you avoid getting drafted in the '60s?

**IGGY:** What I did was, during that call-up in . . . (shouting) When did you go to the draft board, Scott? Was it '68 or '69? Scott has a great story of how he avoided the draft, way better than mine. His was genius. Anyway, what I did was—of course the government's trick is to put you in with guys from your town. The only way to get out was to *fag* out. They were taking guys with every sort of deformity, so I just forgot to wear any underwear and when I had to take off my pants to get in line, I went and I just beat my meat until it was over a foot long, then I walked out. It wasn't too much of a problem, really. They just sorta said, "What's wrong with your weiner?" Hahahahaha.

**CREEM:** What did you think of Bowie's "Red Money"?

**IGGY:** That's *great*! It's a perfect example of recycling; we *are* running out of resources. If we're gonna share the oil, we might as well share the backing tracks. He did ask me first.

**CREEM:** Do you prefer "Sister Midnight" to "Red Money"?

**IGGY:** I don't have any preferences. I prefer five dollars to three dollars.

**CREEM:** Are you going to call in another producer for your next album?

**IGGY:** I don't know. What I'm doing for my next album first of all, it will be ridiculously to the conservative side of AOR. It will probably be pretty folkish, commercially oriented. I'm working in America on the tour through April 12th, then I'm taking eight days between here and the European tour to go to Haiti with Ivan to plan the album. I'm gonna co-write with Kral a lot, I'm probably going to use Haitian rhythms, I think I'll make a descriptive album as opposed to an I/Me album, I won't tell you much about myself, I'll tell you what I think of you. We'll probably use Thom Panunizio from the Record Plant, the other guys I've got in mind are Ric Ocasek from The Cars who I talked to about it; David's a longshot, he'd like to do it. The other guy I would consider is a guy named Chris Thomas, who recently produced the Pretenders album.

**CREEM:** I heard you were up until five o'clock in the morning in Cleveland singing old soul hits with Chrissie Hynde . . .

**IGGY:** (perking up) Yeah, that's right! We did "Midnight Hour," "Soul Man," "I've Been Loving You Too Long," "Louie Louie". . .

**CREEM:** "Louie Louie" hahahahaha

**IGGY:** I don't know, some other songs. They're all the same, aren't they? What else . . . Fuck. We did a real sweet one with a nice melody, uh . . . We didn't do "Reunited!" (laughter all around)

**CREEM:** We get a lot of letters in the office pertaining to you pulling down your pants and hanging a rat at . . .

**IGGY:** I'd like to make that clear. I dropped my drawers because I met this French chick in Montreal and she was very small and I COULD NOT STOP MYSELF. After repeatedly screwing her, finally I woke up with extremely acute abrasions on my penis. It was about as red as those socks (points at girl's red socks). So I was inspecting it. I thought I'd rubbed it, thought I'd hurt it. I had it all bandaged up, and I just *had* to check it. I'm terribly sorry. I told Dennis (tour manager) on the way here tonight I was praying I would take a shit before I went onstage, because what if I had to take a shit tonight? What would I have done? I got a foot-long off before I went on, so I was all right.

**CREEM:** Uh-huh. How did you feel about *TV Eye*?

**IGGY:** Well, the best thing about *TV Eye* was that the budget was $75,000 and I spent $5,000 making it. I lived awhile off the money, and I did it to get off RCA.

**CREEM:** Do you feel that once you get money, and accepted and once you're part of the "ugly industry" that you'll sell out, a la James Williamson?

**IGGY:** Well Mark, to be honest with you, I've been part of the "ugly industry" for at least the last three years. The money I make is probably roughly on a par with the average band member in a consistent gold record band because unlike them, I *don't* have a fat manager who takes a percentage. I *do* run this ship, I *am* the boss so I *do* make a very, very high salary and it hasn't induced me to sell out at all. If I had sold out, I would have done a steppinfetchit dance for those pricks tonight, wouldn't I have? Instead I sing songs like I want to. Would you like to know my income?

**CREEM:** *Noooo!*

**IGGY:** It's roughly $100,000 a year, since *you* brought it up. I make about that every year.

**CREEM:** That's wonderful. Since you're so rich, you can buy me a beer.

**IGGY:** I certainly *would not* buy you a beer because . . .

**CREEM:** Hahahahahahahaha . . .

**IGGY:** You can buy *me* a beer.

**CREEM:** Sure Jim! I've got four dollars.

**IGGY:** Well, that's how I make my money.

**CREEM:** Hey, I buy your albums. I bought the *shitty* European pressing of *Raw Power* after my American copy got broken over my head at a party . . .

**IGGY:** Let's only hope that I make *better* albums in the future because I think most definitely I am the only *honest* rocker that Detroit's produced, that has gotten out of town. The other good ones are still in town.

**CREEM:** What about Bob Seger and Ted Nugent?

**IGGY:** I wouldn't call them rockers; they're something else, but they're not rockers. What they are is quite legitimate, but they are certainly not rockers, and that's fair enough.

**CREEM:** Would you produce an unknown act you found in some sleazy bar in Buttfuck, Iowa?

**IGGY:** No, but what I have done in the past few years is discover some of the most important acts and passed them on to other producers such as the Plastics and Devo, for two examples. I wouldn't *dream* of subjecting a band to Iggy Pop's production hahaha except for my own because that is my privilege. But what I can do is be an appreciator of other talent and be instrumental because I am a *solo* and as a *solo* I have the ability to slide in and out of the various social milieux. I can put them in touch with the people they should know.

**CREEM:** You wouldn't like to be a Svengali . . .

**IGGY:** OH MY GOD NO!!! I've never believed that *anybody* I like needs me as a Svengali! I am more of an admirer. I admire these guys (motions at his group). I am a fan at heart and certainly not a director.

**CREEM:** Speaking of directors, last night you mentioned something about doing a film with Bowie.

**IGGY:** David wants very much to do some directing.

**CREEM:** Is he capable of it?

**IGGY:** MY GOD YES!! Are you kidding me?

**CREEM:** Why?

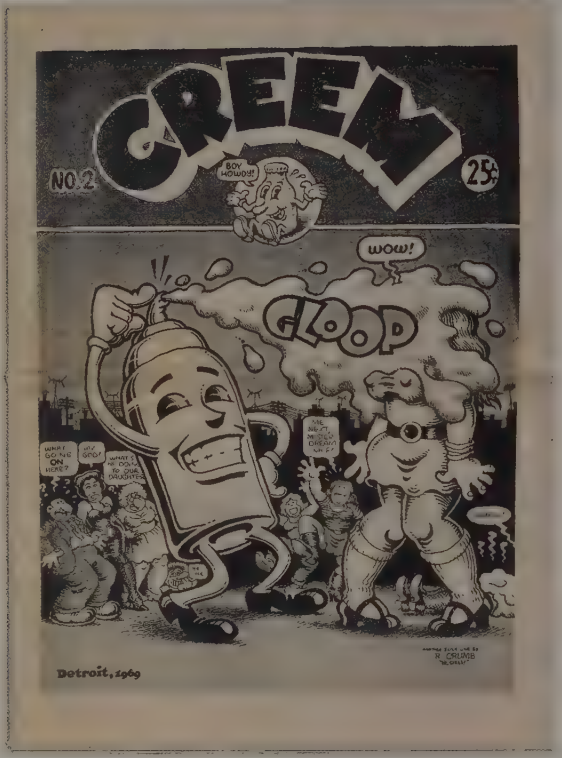
**IGGY:** WHY?!! Because he is one of the geniuses of the ages. He has genius, and something to *say*, and the guts to do things properly. He's a better man than I. I would act under him any time, and I think he will choose me for the lead when he decides to direct. He certainly has something to say and the technique to say it with, which are the two criteria of a good director.

**CREEM:** How much is you, and how much is Bowie on *The Idiot* and *Lust For Life*?

**IGGY:** That's impossible to say. When you mix up the two of us, it becomes a moot point. You could say that his music came out of my personality on those albums and my words came out

# Mad About the Boy!

## (. . . Or, When Crumb Came To Town)



**. . . a historic event, you might say; out of that brief Motown visit came our cover, our Boy genius, Motor City comix and not a few cases of venereal disease.**

**—*CREEM December, 1971***

If you've been asking yourself who that cute little bottle is that you've seen throughout CREEM's history, then let us take a moment to explain. The secret origin of Boy Howdy! is steeped in the stuff that dreams are made of.

Boy Howdy! originated when Robert Crumb—a legend in his own right—laid ink to paper while visiting the Motor City in April 1969. Titled "Detroit 1969," that illustration became the cover of CREEM's second issue and featured Boy Howdy! and Mr. Dreamwhip, future legends both. There are countless versions of the story; only those of Robert Johnson are more celebrated. Tony Reay, CREEM's founding editor, has told his version of the tale to anyone who'd listen—and whether it was he who offered Crumb fifty bucks that he claimed he needed for flowers for a suitor, or Barry Kramer who in turn wanted to give him only twenty-five for a few shots over at the Bronx Bar, Boy Howdy! has become synonymous with CREEM.

When CREEM first gained national notoriety in 1971, Bob Wilson—who also created the Barney & Mike comic for the magazine—had the honor of colorizing Mr. Dreamwhip for the first time. That rendition then graced the December 1971 issue. After that, it was hard to keep the Boy down on the farm.

In 1974, Boy Howdy! hopped onto a beer can, never dreaming that he would be embraced by so many rock stars over the ensuing decades. Wowing them with his witty repartee, he was felt up by the famous with photos and phone numbers to prove it. Thus was born CREEM's Profiles, and what originated as an ad parody has endured to outlive the original.

Indeed, the Boy Howdy! influence on popular culture cannot be overstated. Whether he was being thrown at the Stooges, discovering Kiss, getting 'faced with the Faces, or making cameo appearances via his much sought after T-shirt line in any number of movies or music videos, his ubiquitous smiling mug is the USDA label of hepness itself. Ask for him by name. ■

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of his mouth, or his came out of mine. Two more questions then we'll split and go to a club, OK? Ya wanna go to Bookie's with me?

**CREEM:** Come on! You said that last night!
**IGGY:** Here you sit playing Attractive Nice Guy Journalist and I've already talked to you for half an hour! Two more questions and *that's* it, OK?!!!

**CREEM:** Yes. I heard you recently bought a stereo. What records do you play on it?
**IGGY:** *Another Green World* by Eno, the Wire album, the XTC album, David Bowie's *Low*, Steve Reich's *Music For 18 Musicians*, Phillip Glass' *North Star*, Miles Davis *On The Corner* and the Jack Johnson album, John Coltrane . . . um, I've got four Coltranes anyway. The *Neu 2* album.

**CREEM:** You said in Nick Kent's piece that women generally stink. What would constitute the perfect woman?
**IGGY:** She would be hyper-intelligent, she'd probably be male and she would probably be alternately very gentle and an incredibly stimulating pain in the ass.

**CREEM:** You told me you were a literary person as opposed to . . .
**IGGY:** *That's true*!! I just got a book for a present from Michael. Yeah, look at what I got.

**CREEM:** What is it?
**IGGY:** *Four Comedies* by William Shakespeare. It has *Midsummer's Night Dream*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Tempest* . . . I don't find *The Tempest* a comedy.

**CREEM:** Did you read them in university?
**IGGY:** No, not in university. I read nothing in university except blues charts. Nah, I just read them on my own. I really like my brain, y'know, I get so much pleasure out of my intelligence.

We join the rest of his crew and I pass out the latest issue of CREEM, May '80. Everyone flips through it, and Iggy reads the letter from the person who signed their name "Elmo Osterberg" and has a good laugh. Doug Baum (drums) reads the piece "Pop Tour Derails . . . Briefly" aloud. Doug makes it to ". . . was more concerned with a staff infection . . ." and Iggy barks "Staff infection? *That's* pretty clever!" Doug gets to the part in the piece about Billy Rath, and the Ig says, "I said that? Haha! Mince no words!"

By now, Iggy's laying on the floor on his back. "What did I say about Klaus? He's not an asshole." Doug continues, "It was impossible to . . . " ". . . judge the color scheme of the *new* rhythm section hahahaha," chortles Iggy, and everyone laughs. Other comments by Iggy on the piece, "Hiatus? Hey, it rhymes with anus!" and at the end, the part where Iggy says he likes the South, "*Right on, Iggy*! Gonna buy me a swamp and *ride around*!"

The interview over, everyone decided to go to Detroit's playpen for pinheads, Bookie's Club 870. We arrived just as a local group, The Plugs, were finishing their set.

Inside the club, Iggy talked politely to people, a perfect Northern gentleman. Deciding it was time for boy journalist and Legendary Dave to ride off into the rainy night home, I said goodbye to Iggy and his friends and headed for the door. I didn't quite make it, though.

I felt a tug at my sleeve, and turned around to find Iggy. "Have you got my Marlboros?" he queried.

"I don't have your Marlboros," I told him. "Did you look under the table for them?" Iggy: Hey, it's alright. Sometimes I pick up someone else's cigarettes when I don't mean to."

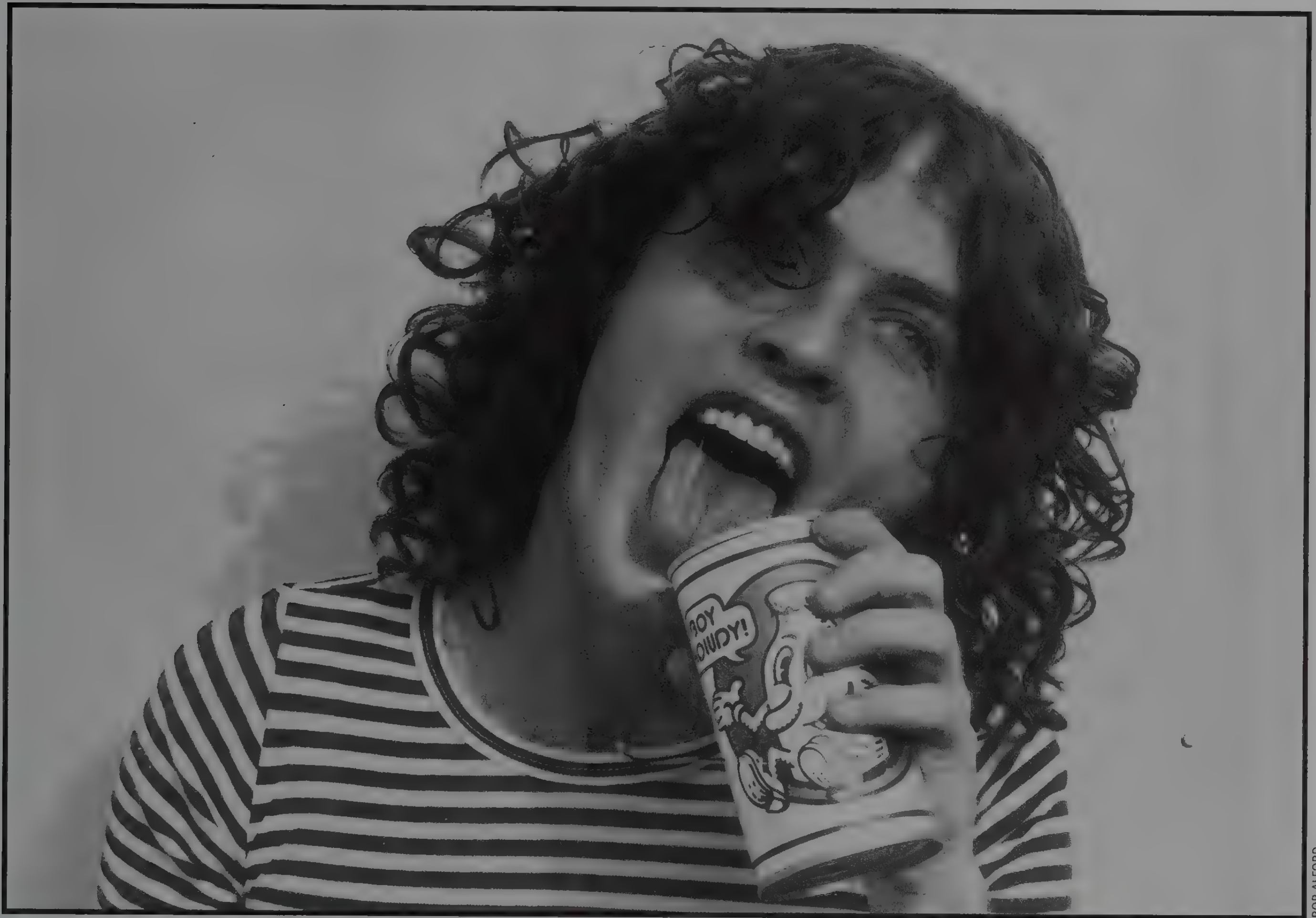
Now I was getting mad. "I don't have your goddamn cigarettes. I don't steal."

To remedy the situation, I bought him a pack of cigarettes from the machine, threw them on his table and left the club, all the while muttering under my breath about what a little shithead he was. Steal from Iggy? Me? My god! Earlier that night, I'd had my movie film taken from me by his manager, I'd bought Iggy and his lady a beer each, while he (supposedly) makes hundreds of thousands of dollars off true fans like me, and then he accuses me of taking his goddamn Marlboros.

Legendary Dave and I hopped into my slide and I turned the motor over. The next thing I knew, Iggy had jumped onto the seat next to me, and apologized. I accepted. But: next time you're in town, Jim, I'd like a pack of Vantages—*if* you can afford it. ■

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")



BOB ALFORD

# ANGUS YOUNG
# OF AC/DC

**HOME:** Somewhere between Tasmania and Bad Axe.

**PROFESSION:** Parlaying screaming chariots of thud into big Aussie bucks all around.

**HOBBIES:** Rendering the gray matter of rock critics *numb*; baying at the moon while mooning at the bay; pant amputation; conspicuous consumption as a way of life.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *The Tree of Life* by Patrick White.

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Gleefully accepting 1981 dollars for 1976 music.

**QUOTE:** "Basically, I just like to get up in front of a crowd and rip it up." —Angus Young

**PROFILE:** Spawned in Oz with Friday on their minds, these Vanda-Youngkin started screeching glam rock and thudded their way to the top, the sexual inclinations of their name taking on a new meaning: the purposeful deafening of millions. One yelper lost down the Highway to Hell, another taking his place, and these kangaroos won't be satisfied 'til *everybody* hops. Have a drink on us, Angus!

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

BOY HOWDY!
Creem

***Authentic*** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**

# Bob Seger
# Bops Horizontally

BY DAVE DiMARTINO • SEPTEMBER 1980 • PHOTO BY BOB ALFORD

Don't let anybody tell you Bob Seger is *not* a cool guy.

Case in point: Seger, Detroit's ying to Ted Nugent's yang dang, is a busy fellow. It's the records biz: *Against The Wind*, his latest, sucked up to the top of the trade mags and never really unsucked, giving him his first Number One LP and more glory than any non-Motownie Detroit artist could ever rightfully expect. Fact is, Bob Seger is HOT right now, and even though he's been hot before, it's the capital letters that make all the difference. Hasn't been a Detroit "local legend" since *Beautiful Loser* or maybe *Live Bullet*, mainly because he's been too busy being an *American* "local legend," the kinda guy that should make us all proud to be Americans because, after all, even DAVE EDMUNDS covered one of his tunes.

Nah, Seger's above all the trendiness of the rock press and even *American Bandstand*, and if he deserves any sort of put-down the most logical one is that the guy's been too damn *omnipresent* lately, popping up on the *Urban Cowboy* soundtrack and the personal soundtracks of every factory worker and post-pube who're going through heavy post-adolescent changes. In fewer words, he *means a lot* to more people than ever lately, and if he was a jerk it would be typical, but he's not and it's not.

MICHIGAN 76
MASSEY

Cover stories everywhere, we even tried to get one here a few months ago but never managed to hook up properly, Seger's management or Capitol or our telephone answering service or maybe even us screwing up at the worst possible times. After all, Billy Joel's been in the biz almost as long as Seger has, and even though the Hassles (ugh) or Attila (ugh-ugh) never registered with certified U.S. hits like "Ramblin' Gamblin' Man" or "Lucifer," his Big Biz quotient tallies up there as high as Bob Seger's and BJ managed a People magazine appearance and one could only question Bob Seger's possibly-likewise motivation. But wasn't it Seger who made Rock 'n' Roll Never Forgets the cliché it now is and doesn't Bob Seger make a point of deliberately not being as obnoxious as the Divine Mr. BJ?

Right. Which still doesn't excuse him from deliberately walking into the *CREEM* offices in late May and saying, "HEY, I HEARD YOU GUYS WANTED TO INTERVIEW ME!" but gives him a much wider point-spread in the Cool Guy Sweepstakes, which are certainly relevant here.

In point of fact, Bob Seger indeed *did* walk into these very offices and caught most of us who'd written him off as a Great Guy Gone Big *extremely* by surprise, but we coped with him and it admirably (I think).

"Hey!" smiled Bob, pleased with himself as we grinned sickly at each other. "You guys don't even gotta *leave the office*! The guy comes to you!!"

And of course the fact that Detroit's literal Favorite Son, returning home for a brief respite from promoting his first-ever #1 LP, managed to walk the streets of Birmingham, MI, without getting mobbed or mugged or mangled made all the difference in the world to us, for good reasons. First: who in their right mind *doesn't* like Bob Seger–or, even if they don't because they're-sick-of-hearing-him-on-the-radio (the usual excuse), who can rightfully put forth *any* ill will toward a guy who exudes the veritable *good vibes* we all remember but refuse to talk about? Bob Seger, aside from the earlier-mentioned cool, is also *nice*: non-prickish, non-belligerent and (it's sad) *completely normal* in these days of graying Freddie Mercurys and pigs with wings. And if that wasn't shameful enough, he's also *good*, as his #1 LP may testify and as his long and distinguished recording career certainly does. Credentials are what most people lack these days, and if anybody's checking at the front door, Bob Seger's wallet is full of 'em, among other things.

So tell us, Bob, we said, as we wheeled out the only *CREEM*-office tape recorder that still ticked: HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE NUMBER ONE?

"Well," smiled the seated-seconds-earlier Bob, "when they *told* me, I was in the Sunset Marquee." He was obviously referring to Los Angeles. "We were fixing to play the Forum. I'm surprised I didn't put a *hole* in the ceiling." Bob considered. "It was pretty cool. Something to say: 'Well, we *did it*.' Yaknow? If we never do it again, at least we did it once. And it's nice to have it after 15 years."

After 15 years *indeed*. Anyone who doesn't have Bob Seger's first album, called *Bob Seger* on the spine but *Ramblin' Gamblin' Man* on the back (by the Bob Seger System, no less) should run to their nearest cut-out bin and search for the deleted-budget LP of the same name, even though, as Bob soon revealed, it's no longer in print at his request. It's hot stuff, for the most part, and when I pulled it out earlier today-as-I-write, it struck me that Seger's current fame conceivably parallels, say, an analogous situation in which Roky Erickson of the Thirteenth-Floor-Elevators, after their biggie "You're Gonna Miss Me, Baby" might suddenly make a major claim to fame in 1975 with *Live Elevator*, in which he and his imaginary Silver Elevator Band perform "Miss Me" along with current Springsteenish-tunes that somehow manage to strike the American Heartland in the gut and lift Roky from obscurity to sudden well-deserved fame. In fact, Seger's local Detroit biggie "2+2=?" (never a hit in my Miami homeland) from his debut-disc in no small way resembles the Elevators' "Miss Me" if only for its shimmering monkey-guitar lead and implied political statement. Seger's "relics" are not only things for him to be proud of (ditto for Roky), but things to be sought after.

Thus, the question to Bob: which of your many fine LPs are *no longer available* in this country, please?

"*Back In '72*," responds Bob, who apparently would prefer not to think about it, "*Noah* and, uhh, *Brand New Morning*. *That* I have buried in my back yard." Which, incidentally, merits special mention as the almost-first-of-its-kind *true* solo LP in which the younger Bob plays all instruments and which includes the lower-cased "song for Him" which, in this instance, Keeps The Faith. "I dunno," figures Bob, "'*72*'s got a couple of decent songs on it, but the mix is so awful. Just so *awful*. One of these days I'm gonna get some time, I'd like to sing some of those songs again. I thought I sang some of those so *terrible*. On *Back In '72*, I was singing pretty crappy."

What's obvious here is that Bob can be discussed on two levels: as a current contemporary phenomenon (which, smart guys agree, automatically cheapens him) or on purely historical levels (smart guys think this makes things more legitimate). Smart guys may be right on both levels, but the latter course seems better this time out, mainly because Bob is one of those guys who really *are* hot-stuff-through-years. The Detroit hits, on Cameo-Parkway, maintain interest and, in one instance, prove a genuine laff-riot ("Persecution Smith" out-Dylans the Other Bob). The hits: "Heavy Music," "Persecution Smith" and "East Side Story."

Once more, Bob, the question: what's the legal status of the old Cameo-Parkway stuff?

"We own it now, Capitol bought it all," suggests Bob, quickly covering his tracks. "As far as I *know*. I think it's public domain now, I think anybody can . . . " He hesitates. "I shouldn't say that with a tape recorder on. But 'Heavy Music,' 'Persecution Smith,' 'East Side Story,' I think those three songs are . . . I mean we just *put* 'Heavy Music' on *Smokin' O.P.'s*, we didn't ask anybody. And nobody called. Maybe if it had been *big* they would've called, I dunno."

Sentimental sods that we be, however, we suggest to the open-and-quite-cooperative Seger, it would be nice to see all that old stuff compiled and finally put in circulation for true-record-collecting historians. Or fans who haven't heard it.

"The band's been buggin' me," admits Bob, "about doin' a double 'Greatest Hits,' but I think maybe, somewhere down the line, maybe a year or two from now, we'll put out a double. I've already got a title for it, we'll call it *Collector's Item*. And we'll put in out, it'll have no costs but the cover on it. We'll put it out for $7.98 or whatever we can get away with, and we'll put all those old things on it: *'This is for REAL fans. Unless you're a real fan, DON'T BUY THIS RECORD.'*" Bob, for those confused, implies this would be the cover sticker. "And we'll put on all the 'Persecutions', and the 'Heavy Musics' and the '2+2s' and the original 'Looking Back' and all this stuff that people can't get anymore. And the cool thing is that they're all two-and-a-half minute records, so we can put 15 of 'em on there . . ."

. . . I don't think anyone can argue that *Against The Wind* doesn't sound good, at least not very convincingly, as said LP is Seger's cleanest recording by far and makes earlier stuff like, oh, say "Lucifer" or even "Get Out Of Denver" sound like three-and-four-chord mush. But hey, this isn't *Stereo Review* and we don't grade recording quality around here, we grade content. Usually. And all I know is when I first heard *Against The Wind* I didn't think much of it. Didn't hate it, didn't love it, thought "Shinin' Brightly" sounded Van Morrisonish circa "I can hear the fireworks," then thought I'd rather hear an old Them album. Clearly not the desired response. Somehow the word "safe" floated around, waiting to be applied as effortlessly as the standard God-why-doesn't-Bob-wake-up-and-play-some-real-*jams*-man Factory Worker reprise.

OK, Bob, we'll ask the question *for* them: why *didn't* you skip the slow stuff and play-some-real-*jams*-man?

"Have you heard 'Nine Tonight?'" Bob asks back, and we nod. One of the best cuts on the *Urban Cowboy* soundtrack. "OK," Bob continues, "that's one of the cuts we tried real hard to fit in there, ya know? And like I said, it's all a balancing act. Seriously, I was just trying to do something that was different from *Stranger* and different than *Night Moves*. I really was. And if I'd put 'Nine Tonight' on that record, which is what Punch wanted [and if you dopes don't know who Punch is, you've never read the back cover of a Bob Seger album], and pulled off 'Good For Me' or something, it really would have changed the whole balance of the record for my *head*, ya know? I was just trying not to repeat myself," he repeated, "And I think that's–and I'm not trying to commend myself or anything–a bit of a risk in itself. And it's not really a matter of being mellow, it's a matter of the best songs. If the best songs are medium, those are the ones I gotta use. I thought 'Nine Tonight' was number eleven"–hint: only 10 songs on *Against The Wind*–"so I left it off. As far as being a good, whole-entity song from top to bottom and not sounding like anything I'd done before, 'Nine Tonight' has a little bit of shades of 'Katmandu' and a little bit of shades of 'Hollywood Nights'. So I said 'Hey, I already *did* that.' *Plus* I'm thinking of the show, I don't wanna be playing 10 songs that sound the same, ya know what I mean?"

Indeed we *do*, Bob. But have you *always* felt this way? Eighteen months is a long time between albums, you must agree, and now, with international stardom looming larger than ever before, could it be that you're *more* self-conscious about repeating yourself than ever before? The eyes of the music world, after all, *are* upon you.

"I make an absolute effort not to repeat myself," says Bob, then grabbing the "safe" that was hovering nearby and applying it re his new LP. "I don't think it's safe." He pauses. "I don't think *anything's* safe right now. The way the music biz is going, nobody knows what's going on.'

We nod in agreement: *we* certainly don't know what's going on.

"You look at shows now. Fleetwood isn't selling every show, Linda isn't selling every show. You know, knock on wood"–here actual wood-knocking sounds can be heard on the tape–"we *have*, every single show has gone clean. But they keep calling us up and asking us to do more shows, and we haven't been sure, in this economy, in this situation. Everybody wants to say the business is going great, but the fact of the matter is that it was a bull market in '77 and '78. It *isn't* anymore."

Anyway, nobody's gonna argue that Bob Seger *doesn't* deserve every bit of the success he's now enjoying; the paid-his-dues-in-full tag seems almost made to order for the poor guy after almost 20 years in the biz. And of course he really isn't a "poor guy" at all anymore. He may even be responsible, at least partially, for making *this* year a bull market with *Against The Wind*'s success. Of course, maybe not, too. Who knows? But what, we ask, is left for the guy to *do* after all these years, with an LP finally resting comfortably at the Number One spot on all three of the trade charts?

"MAKE A BETTER RECORD!" shouts Bob. "WITH BILL SZYMCZYK! FINALLY, A *REAL* PRODUCER!"

Indeed, one of the reasons *Against The Wind* sounds unlike toilet tissue could be that Seger and the aforementioned Punch are no longer doing it by themselves. In Bob's own words: "Me and Punch aren't gonna do it no more! I'm gonna go in there, I'm gonna let Bill mix it all and I'm not *ever* gonna mix again.

"This is a true story, I told Springsteen this–I mixed 'Nine Tonight' 151 times, *five* days a week for three solid weeks. Punch had a *real* hard-on for that song, he loved it, and made us go in and mix it over and over. And now Szymczyk does all that. And when we cut 'Against The Wind', 'Her Strut' and 'Betty Lou', we just went in and *cut* it. And Szymczyk said 'goodbye, I'll call you when the mix is done.' And he mixed it about three or four times and it was *perfect*. 'Cause the guy's got such good ears. So I'm really looking forward to the next one, I think it's gonna be the best record we've ever made."

"But I'll tell you," confides Bob, "we were *goin'* for Number One. We were Number Two for five weeks and I called Punch and said 'TAKE 'EM ALL! EVERY CITY! I DON'T CARE! WE'RE PLAYIN' *EVERY* NIGHT!'"

Seger's got a big grin on his face, just like the one on *Brand New Morning* even though he refuses to remember it. "We had a chance to make it," says he, "and we wanted to make some history. At least some Silver Bullet history if nothing else, so we could say we were Number One at least *once* in our lives. 'Cause the market may change, I might be mustache wax in two months, man. Who knows?"

Not Seger. Not me. I don't even *have* a mustache, but that's not the point. So we talk a little more about music, Seger being one of the few Big Boys around that actually *enjoys* listening to other people's music. He talks about pal Bruce Springsteen: "Yeah, I'm a big fan of Bruce's, I see 'im every chance I get. In fact I heard one of his new tunes, it sounded great. I was gonna go down in the studio with him and [producer Jon] Landau, but after I read my Marsh review I figured it might be bad for his CAREER!!"

Here Bob refers to Dave Marsh's review of *Against The Wind* in a recent *Rolling Stone*. It was, shall we say, "non-positive."

"I'd like to discuss that song, 'Her Strut', 'cause Marsh said that he thought the song was misogynist, MALICIOUS MISOGYNY. My *God, I don't hate women, I'm for* women standin' up, I'm all *for* it. Poor Dave . . . "

Well, uh, have you *talked* with him about it?

Seger shakes his head. "No, not really. I'll probably have dinner with him in six months, when he cools down. He's a great critic, a great critic. He just decided it's time to shoot Bob in the back. I mean, that's just *Dave's* viewpoint. He doesn't like my friends. I dunno, East Coast versus West Coast, ya know? Fortunately, we're in the middle so we can just duck.

"But anyway, 'Her Strut'. The very *title* conjures up an image to me, ya know? And it's something I had to work my way around, 'cause saying 'I love to watch her strut' is almost an *automatic* sexist thing. 'Her Strut'. I really struggled with that, I did. But I loved the hardness of the word 'strut' in the song, ya know? And I worked real hard on the verses to try to put across the idea that this is *not* a sexist theme, that what I'm trying to say here is that at the bottom line it's human nature, that men are *still* gonna love women for being sexual in spite of all this other stuff. Women have to understand that it's *still* gonna be human nature. Can't turn off the hormones.

"I didn't wanna look like I was some sort of sexist *monster*, and I'm not, I'm really not. Honest to God."

*We believe you*, Bob.

He looks up at the wall clock: "Hey, I gotta be HOME FOR DINNER at six!"

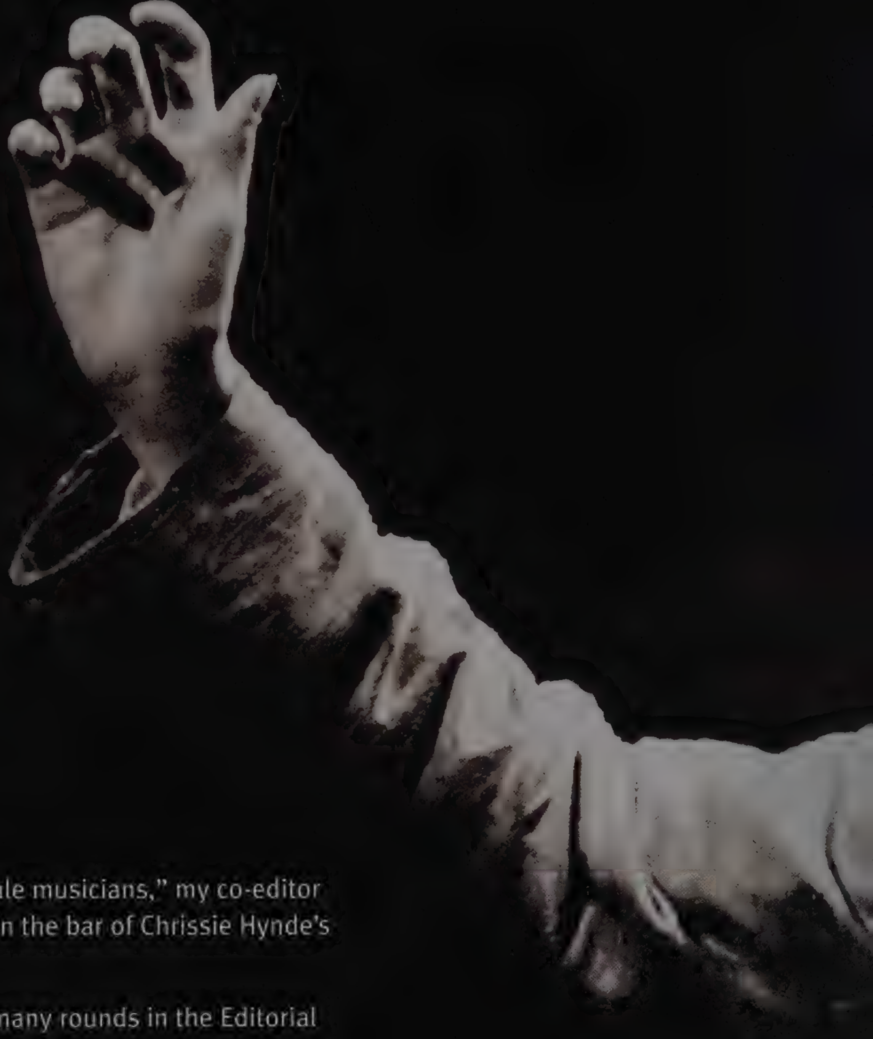
Further proof Bob Seger is cool: he tells *jokes*, too!

"Nah, gotta keep the home life together," says Bob. "Ya know? Me and Teegarden–David Teegarden, old pal and current Silver Bullet drummer–"were talkin' about it the other day. Like, on the road, *everything* is done for you. 'Here's the towels, here's the drink, here's the limo, here's this and that' . . . And then you go home and it's 'Here's the *GARBAGE*! TAKE IT OUT! HERE'S THE LAWNMOWER, ROCK STAR!!' You shoulda seen me washing my motorcycle yesterday . . . "

And so OK, that's Bob Seger for you. Could quote his "Still The Same" lyrics and end profoundly, but that's stupid. Could end by telling you his shows (six of 'em!) at Cobo Hall were GREAT, but I wasn't in town that week, so who knows? Probably *should* end by telling you that he *personally* sought out Mitch Ryder to open those six shows for him in Detroit, and Mitch did. ■

CREEM

# CHRISSIE DON'T YA TALK SO LOUD



## PRETENDERS STOP OUR SOBBING

BY SUSAN WHITALL • AUGUST 1980
PHOTOS BY ROBERT MATHEU

### AS LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER

"There's something I dread about talking to female musicians," my co-editor DiMartino sighed as we drank beer and worried in the bar of Chrissie Hynde's Detroit hotel.

I knew this wasn't just sexism—we've gone too many rounds in the Editorial room on *those* grounds.

No, this was heavy Writer Dread. This particular dread we call the Patti Smith Syndrome, whereby a highly creative individual proves also to be a tensely strung personality. It seemed peculiarly endemic to women in the business, and no, I ain't being chauvinistic. The business is harder on them: maybe they're harder on everybody else as a result.

With such a person, one meeting would be peace, love, and better living through human chemistry. The next day, or week: eat shit and die, journalist scum.

Chrissie Hynde's reputation preceded her: we'd been entertained for months by tales in the English weeklies about cars wrecked, people insulted and/or bopped, and always-much liquor consumed. Entertaining, until we have to ride the tiger ourselves.

And even without the Chrissie Myth telegraphing across the Atlantic, there was that sullen beleathered album cover, featuring Ms. Hynde looking like she's just as soon hit you as sleep with you, Jack . . . or maybe a little touch of both.

Once we'd slapped our test pressing on the turntable, we found that the songs on *The Pretenders* were a thoroughbred mix of rockers and soulful Chrissie crooning, punctuated with her strong, piercing voice spitting "fuck off" in "Precious," to the delight of most of the women I observed and the intrigue of the men.

The combination of an attractive (despite what she thinks) female showing spirit and anger as well as the tenderer emotions was potent—and America was ripe for her vivid musical personality. The predictability of such chantoozies as Debbie Harry or Pat Benatar or Ellen Foley or whoever was such a perfect bland backdrop for Chrissie's rarefied, orchid presence, it almost could have been planned. Her only possible American competition, Patti Smith, had retired to bucolic Ann Arbor domesticity, leaving a sorry field of contenders.

Do such flora grow in Akron? Obviously yes, although Chrissie felt she couldn't stay and flourish, and given her style-heavily steeped in British music of the '60s—she would have been unhappy anywhere else but in London, treading the streets of her idols.

She confirmed to us later that she lived for the British bands who visited nearby Cleveland-and rather neglected the local Midwestern boys.

"This is one of my big regrets," she confessed. "I was sitting in Ohio, wanting to go see the Yardbirds and stuff, and I thought the Stooges (who often played the area) well, they were a local band or something, so I wasn't interested."

"And the MC5, when they said 'High school-rah rah rah'—I didn't want to know *them* . . . at the time. 'Cause I hated high school so much. So I didn't go to check these guys out . . . I assumed they couldn't be good."

After what she described as a "Joe Average" Akron upbringing, Chrissie did a brief stint at art school and made her presence known about the Akron-Kent-Cleveland area. At least, judging from the countless people who've offered to give us "the inside scoop" on Chrissie at art school, at this party or that, crashing in Lou or Joe's apartment with a boyfriend, or whatever—and Detroit's some 250 miles away.

In her 28 years on the planet, Chrissie was bound to rub shoulders with at least some of these myth-mongerers, but at present she is such a complex creature that any one Buckeye remembrance is bound to show just a fleeting glimpse of the singer who's currently brazening her way into the American Top Ten.

Likewise, a simple sketch of Chrissie's London years provides no real clue to the Pretenders' meteor-like 1979 success. Chrissie cleaned houses, waited on tables, dabbled in rock journalism, ("I know what it's like to go into a room and meet someone as a journalist, and sit there . . . "she said later) and ran with a talented, musical bunch of people but never really struck out on her own. But she seems to realize the importance of those vagabond, dare we say hippie years, rattling around London doing everything *but* singing with a band.

"The other guys [the Pretenders] had all been working with other bands," she explained later on "but because I would never get on stage . . . But I was waiting, I knew I was amassing experience with these other people."

"But I knew that wasn't the band that I was really going to stretch my legs in, so to speak. As soon as this band happened, I was willing to go and record with them, which I wouldn't have done with someone else. Maybe little backup vocals for some bread . . . but I knew *this* was the band. I didn't have any doubts . . . I knew that we'd do *something*!"

At our first meeting with Chrissie, during the band's soundcheck at the Motor City Roller Rink, my co-worker and I managed to mutter hello and disappear into the skateroom when we were introduced. We'd been lounging against a wall, earlier, speculating on our photographer Bob Matheu's lifestyle and eating habits, when a piercing female voice worthy of a Memorex commercial entered the Rink.

"HEEEEYYYYYY!" This girl with a pink bunny hat followed it. She was hailing a buddy. We quivered. Of Course it was Chrissie, and she stalked up and down the roller rink's locker area like Ilsa, she-wolf of the S.S. "Where THE HELL is there a mirror in this pop stand?" She snapped at no one in particular. "Oh," she softened, spotting an employee of the place, "I didn't mean to call it a pop stand in front of you. I just want a mirror!"

He directed her, and we started devising alternate, cowardly solutions to the task at hand. We wouldn't bitch and moan for an interview like all the other mags, we'd show the yellow feather and hightail it back to the office, where we could drink beer, suck our thumbs and write . . . a think piece!

### KILLED BY A DHARMA VEGGIE?

But nah, we didn't. We turned up at the hotel, planted ourselves in the bar to cry and be rooted out by photographer Matheu, who fetched us to the lair of Chrissie . . . . . . We apologized for being so quiet at the soundcheck (Chrissie has remarked upon our shyness to Bob Matheu).

"Well you're in the doghouse now, *Bob*," she laughed, and swigged some Budweiser. Bob Looked scared.

We talked about Chrissie being physically in Detroit—the lack of radio airplay (now the worst radio setup anyone could imagine) despite the album's ranking as I write of #11 with a bullet. But so what, right WRIF? The local fans bought the record and sold out the show—it's a safe bet they wouldn't be listening to Detroit FM anyway.

Chrissie had been to Detroit at least once before-with a carload of friends from Akron, she'd driven up to see Bowie on his Ziggy Stardust tour at the Fisher Theatre.

We'd tried to bring one of her Detroit heroes, Mitch Ryder, down with us, but it turned out he was still in Paris, having finished a tour, mourning the death of Jean-Paul Sartre. We didn't tell her that—figured it would blow the image. Where should we place him? Eating ribs on the East Side? Or better yet, bowling, with the smokestacks of River Rouge behind him. That's where all cool Detroiters are supposed to want to be from, after all. Right? We lie all the time.

More information was extracted from Chrissie fairly easily: No, she *wouldn't* buy "Brass In Pocket" if she was a kid—didn't like the mix.

We fired more questions: did she feel she was treated as an obnoxious American *over there* as opposed to just an obnoxious musician?

"Well," she mused, "I've lived there for seven years or something, and I know everyone in town, in London. They're used to me, you know? I've been a face in the crowd in London just like anyone else who's been living there for seven years. So they don't think of me as like the American passing through town. They know they're not gonna get rid of me now. And I can make a pretty good cup of tea, so I've been accepted . . . "

Neither she nor drummer Martin Chambers (who was a fitting interview partner/comic foil for Hynde), showed signs of tour fatigue other than a fondness for dumb jokes and insulting each other with fervor. This, despite only having a few days off between their five-week British tour and the current U.S. haul.

"I could keep doing this for a long time," Chrissie said happily. "It doesn't bother me—I'm not tired of it . . . but you know, you gotta

work up new material. I gotta write some songs, or else I'll crack up."

She did no writing on the road?

"I do that kind of thing when I'm alone," Chrissie replied. "I have to spend a lot of time alone . . . and I might get an idea for a song—it could be like three years ago. There was one tragedy where I left a notebook full of lyrics and stuff in one motel.

"And you know, you're writing over a period of months or something-you just jot something down . . . "

Long silence, suppressed giggles.

Chrissie sighed. "I want to clear this thing up!"

"This" being the incident in the Memphis club "Fridays," at least reported in Rolling Stone, to the effect that Ms. Hynde, blocking an aisle and asked to vacate it had responded by swinging a chair at the club manager, necessitating her being sat on by the manager until the cops arrived, and ending with a handcuffed Chrissie kicking out the windows of the police car and being invited to spend the night in the slammer.

Chrissie was torn as to whether we should even mention the incident, but you can't tell a writer the *true* story, and then remark that it wouldn't help to print it anyway. At least both versions enter the collective consciousness, eh Chrissie?

"I was not blocking an aisle," she complained. " I was not blocking an aisle. I was sitting down—at a table, minding my own business, after spending a lot of cash in there, the whole night. And I wasn't even being loud or anything. I was sitting down! I wasn't even saying anything. I was sitting like this [she posed demurely over her beer]. And this guy comes up to me and sort of . . . wasn't very tactful in his approach to me. And it kind of got me going. It was my fault."

Well, Chrissie, we joked-that's the kind of thing that we heard about that filled us with trepidation before we talked to you . . . we didn't want to get hit.

She scoffed: "I'm a baby, I can't fight! I don't like it when people fight, I really don't."

Bob Matheu offered helpfully: "People stay away from you now, when they—"

"That's the thing, see," Chrissie replied, exasperated. "To me this it the bummer. I'm 28 right? I'm an *old dog*, and I'm the way I am. But how it looks—I mean, that's just the normal kind of thing that would happen, you know? You go into a bar, someone gives you some flak. But how it would look to me, if they didn't know us, and I had read about it, I would thank God she comes over here, and probably thinks "We're really hot shit, and I am somebody special and you *can't tell me*,'" She stabbed the air with her finger, "thinking that I could do anything that I wanted, and get into any kind of fight 'cause I know I'd get bailed out—a real spoiled brat type thing, that's how it would look to me if I'd read it.

She wailed plaintively" "But it wasn't my fault, and I was victimized, and it was really awful, and now my mom's been on the phone and I have to—it's really terrible, it's a real bummer. Plus, those guys, the cops said, "She's either gonna spend the night inside or she's gonna spend two weeks in the hospital.' Cause I was really winding them up—'cause they were really winding me up."

Martin: "I was shouting 'Take the hospital! Take the hospital!'"

Chrissie continued. "No, but can you imagine? They would really have loved to smash my face, 'cause I was winding them up. I [getting excited again] consider it a windup when someone *throws* you in the back seat of a car in handcuffs—that's windup! All the guys in that place . . . the disc jockey-everyone was real—AIEYYYY!—up for a scrap and wanted to get in there . . . "

We pushed on to happier topics—the Pretenders' music—the point, after all, of our being here. Somewhere out there, a kid in Drayton Plains was buying a Pretenders album . . . it would be natural for us to ponder why. Why not *Scream Dream*?

Martin added, "It reflects the sort of music we do . . . there's a bit of variation to it, it isn't just straight rock: '1-2-3-4' and that's it. There's a bit of this, and a bit of that . . . "

"We don't really take any sort of political type stance," Chrissie continued, "or put ourselves in any kind of bag musically. We don't have any . . . real image or anything like that."

Do they feel a need for one? "Well, I guess we haven't had a need for it," Chrissie replied. "We haven't consciously said 'Well look, let's not have any style whatsoever."

"Everyone else, particularly in London, was very image-conscience, and I am a slob, I know when I'm beat, so I wasn't gonna change."

"Who wants to wear a pink suit, anyway?" Martin said, sounding positively Zippy-like.

"Our whole thing is really just play music, and the records, and playing," Chrissie stressed, "What you see is what you get, really."

But how did she see herself? The songs on the album run the gamut from the tender "Kid" and girlish "Stop Your Sobbing" to the flesh-ripping "Precious" and the lusty, sopping wet "Up The Neck." How does she reconcile the public's two images of Chrissie Hynde—the soft person singing, "Kid" and the tough girl?

"I've never really heard that," she said, shaking her head.

But "Precious" has all this tough imagery . . .

"I didn't think that was hard and tough," she protested.

No?

Bob Matheu jumped in: "I know a lot of people have that impression because of the 'fuck off!' line—for guys to hear a chick say that, they say "Wow! Don't mess with her!'"

"See, this is another thing in that song," Chrissie sighed. "I realize, in reading reviews, people always get the lyrics all wrong. I dunno if I sing like I've got a handful of change in my mouth or what, but they really do misinterpret the thing something awful sometimes, and I think everybody thinks I'm tellin' somebody to fuck off, and I'm not!"

"Let's see-what is that line? It says "Howard the Duck and Mr. Stress both stayed'—Mr. Stress is a band in Cleveland—it's so innocent! It goes "Howard the Duck and Mr. Stress both stayed/Trapped in a world that they never made/But not me baby I'm too precious I had to fuck off!' I'm not tellin' anyone to fuck off, I just said I left . . . I had to piss off."

"My impression of you has just changed!" Bob Matheu cried.

Chrissie laughed. "Then FUCK OFF! No . . . someone gave me a badge backstage—a Wayne County badge that says 'If You Don't Wanna Fuck Me, Baby, Fuck Off!' I thought 'Oh, thanks,' and put it on, and it occurred to me that they gave it to me because I said 'fuck off' in the song, and they thought that was, like, my *thing*!"

But as for the tough/tender tag you always get-wasn't it probably because of the variety of songs, of emotions expressed? Chrissie pondered.

"I also get this thing all the time where people think I'm sort of sexual—I don't know. The way these songs are interpreted, you know—I mean, I don't think all our songs are about sex or pulling a guy or anything. Everyone thinks 'Brass In Pocket' is like—they'll say "Chrissie, now tell me, 'Brass In Pocket' is like . . . the definitive song of sexuality!" They think I'm going in a bar, trying to pull a guy. And I mean, it is the last thing that I thought of! I say

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"Pardon?' They always think that I'm talking about sex or something."

Martin interjected: "In Chicago they misquoted—well, they thought the lyrics in 'Brass In Pocket' went, instead of 'Gonna use my sidestep, Gonna use my *sausage*."

"Someone else said they thought "Gonna use my *sexy*,'"Chrissie laughed. "I said 'Pardon? Gonna use *what*?'"

"And then another one I remember, one of my favorite songs, 'The Phone Call'—one of my favorite lyrics—I'm sure no one knows what the hell I'm saying in that."

No, not at all.

"Well," Chrissie laughed, "we'll have to wait for the songbook to come out."

She finished off her Bud, and was off and running at the mouth again.

"Our new song, 'Talk Of The Town,' have you heard it?"

We all nodded.

"Well, there's one line, at the very end of the first verse, it says: "Out loud in a crowd everybody heard/T'was the talk of the town.' And I read the quote—they wrote the lyrics out in one of the English papers, and it says, 'I was the talk of the town,' Which, in the context of the song, really makes it look like I'm the *hot dog*, saying like '*Yeah!*'

"Just the slightest misquote can throw the whole angle of the song off."

What about the infamous "You're gonna make a plastic surgeon a rich man?"

"Oh yeah, 'Tattooed Love Boys.' But I didn't say that, I said '*You know what they say . . .*' I was repeating something that someone once said to me" Stop *sniveling*, you're gonna make a plastic surgeon a rich man.'

Jeez, you're mellow. We're leaving.

"I'm stoned on pot," she laughed. "No, I'm not, I don't have the kind of *front* to say 'Stop sniveling, you're gonna make a plastic surgeon a rich man.'

"You know, really, when I think of what a lot of people are thinking-that I walk around with a chair [she jumped off the bed, put her dukes up and yelled] saying 'HEY! YOU WANNA PUT THAT CIGARETTE OUT!'" She is indeed scary, although we're laughing to hard to worry about it.

The truth is: Chrissie is . . . a hippie? Nah-more like a fusion of a '50s jazzbo bohemian with a greaser and a '60s hippie as well.

She eschews eating flesh (a problem on the road). She mourns her cat's disappearance from her ex-flatmate's house in London, and is teased mercilessly by the boys in the band, who torment her by meowing and carrying on. "Apparently he was having a scrap in the hall and one of the guys living in the house want and booted him," she explained. "Caved his head in to something, and he split. That got me pretty upset but I don't wanna think about that—I'll wait 'til I have a little bit of time on my own, to have a good cry over it."

She urges her Detroit audience not to buy "any more cars," a stunning piece of naïveté considering that a good half of them must have bought their tickets with auto factory-earned money. No cars bought, no jobs, no money for Pretenders tickets or records.

We can forgive her such careless politics on the grounds of her voice; it's been compared to Sandie Shaw's or even Aretha Franklin's, but it's most like Martha Reeves, a real fog-cutter of a wail. Loud or soft, it doesn't show a bit of strain even after rigorous touring—no Stevie Nicks vapors for Chrissie's iron-clad pipes.

In fact, if it wasn't for "Stop Your Sobbing," I couldn't imagine Chrissie's meaty vocal chords working out on any songs of a girl group, or R&B nature. Well, I was wrong. Not only has she performed such numbers on stage, she dueted with Iggy, of course. They took over the stage at a club in Cleveland, and went to work on such chestnuts as "I Got You, Babe," "Dock Of The Bay," "Louie, Louie," etc. Chrissie's memories of the night are hazy but warm:

"That was one of the highlights of my life, if you can imagine," she enthused. "I mean, I think he is such a brilliant singer—he's a songwriter, a performer, everything—and I've been listening to him for so long now, and I just love him to death, and here I am, onstage, singing with him. It was too much. It would have been, like if Martin could have gotten onstage with, um . . . "

"Lucille Ball?" Martin offered. General laughter, "What? It's not funny!"

"I don't want to get into too much of an Iggy Pop rap here," Chrissie continued, "but I think her a very generous, sophisticated, mature, intelligent . . . there's something about him, that's immature, though . . . he's like a kid! I've seen him in hotel rooms and stuff—by the time he enters and gets the door open he's already peeling things off just like a little kid who can't keep his clothes on in Sunday School!

"If I could go back into the past for one night I'm sure it would be for a Stooges gig."

Getting off Iggy, then (this is actually an extremely brief summary of about two pages of Iggy commentary), did Chrissie enjoy all the media attention she was getting?

"Well,: she considered, "it's better than a kick in the teeth . . . It's great, but again, we're on the road, we're working, and I don't ever sit back and think "Hmmmmmm [she leers evilly] I wonder how many *cities* I'm being played in at the moment . . . I wonder how many *guys* are sitting there looking at my record, I wonder how many *girls* have gone out and bought of a pair of fingerless gloves today!'"

Did she ever get many guys coming on to her? Aside from Memphis?

"Surprisingly not very much," she mused, "but I'm not that sort of sex symbol I guess. You know, I don't stand onstage and . . . I'm not very enticing or anything. No . . . I really don't get guys coming on to me. Funny, that-what am I doing wrong?"

"They're all homosexuals," Martin replied. "You attract homosexuals and transvestites."

"I get some guys making some pretty lewd-type-uh, I can tell what they're saying-when I'm onstage, and I just try not to look at those guys," Chrissie remarked. "If there's a guy at the front who's being attentive, you know, and he's nice looking, then I'm a lot more inclined to want to look at him than at some guy at the side of the stage who's going [she performed the classic finger-fucking-fist motion with her hands]. Some of these guys, geez! I don't know what they think-they'll stand there throughout the set, and they think maybe some obscene gesture's gonna . . . "

Get them a date? Chrissie was about to kick us out, so we fired off one last Q: Did it bother her, being 28 and admitting it, that in the midst of the new wave, especially in England, everybody was ashamed to be over 21 or 22? If they were . . .

"But that's the funny thing, all those guys were lying about it," Chrisie replied. "They're crazy, man! If I was gonna lie about my age, I'd say I was 34! And then people would say "Well, she's doing something right, she really doesn't look her age. And then people respect you, and think, if you're under the table or something, they'll say 'Well, let her go to it, because look at her! The proof's in the pudding!'

"But if I was gonna walk around and say I was, like 23, people would say, *God*, don't let her have another drink!'

"Which of course, is what they're saying anyway . . . ." ■

CREEM

# Creem Dreem

ADAM ANT / ADAM & THE ANTS SEPTEMBER 1981

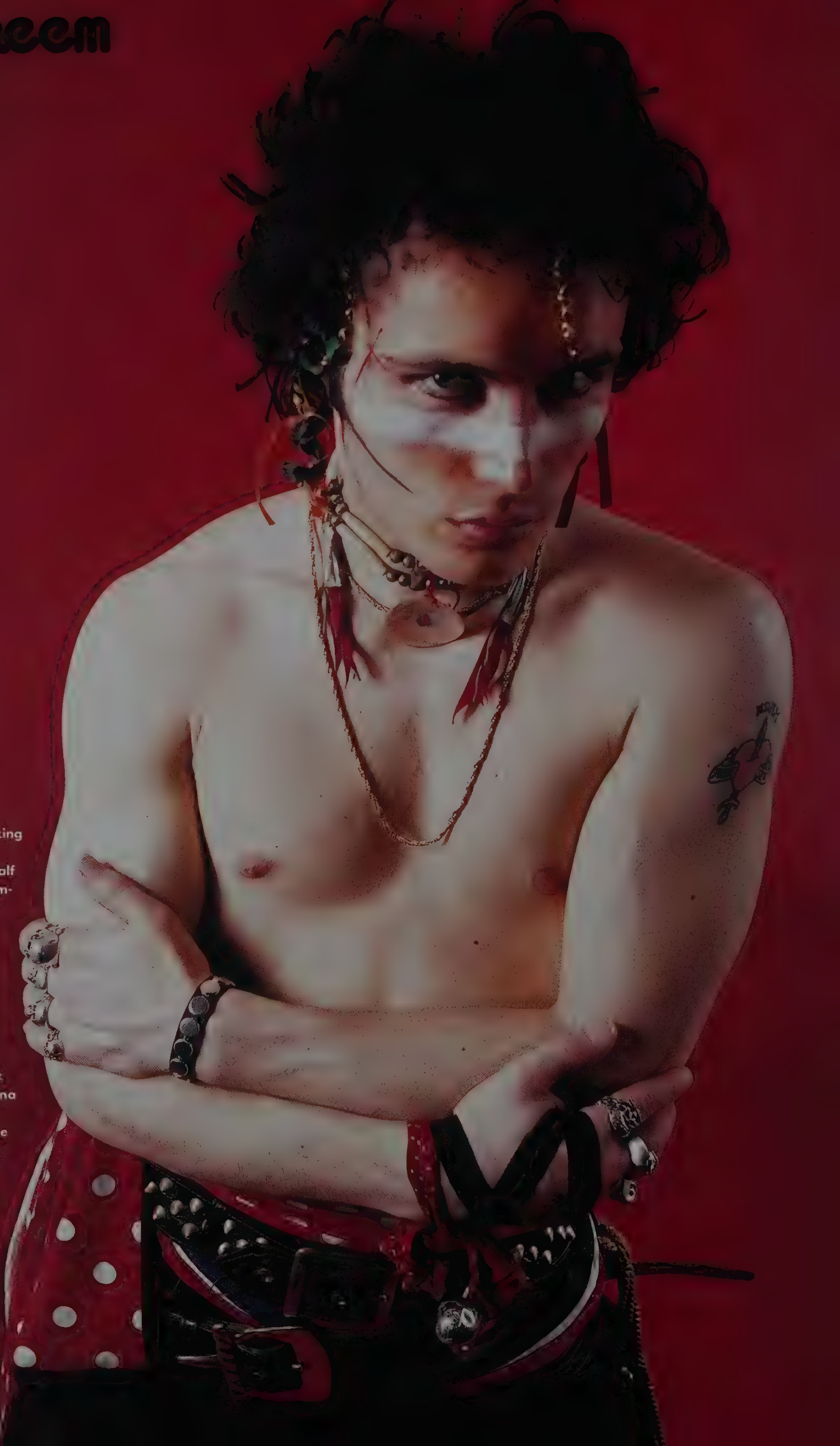

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PHOTO BY
ROBERT MATHEU

CREEM™

# HOW NOT! TO SHOOT A CREEM PROFILE

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")

Since 1974 Boy Howdy! has been the preferred beer of choice for rock stars all over the world. But with great beer comes great responsibility, which is why we here at America's Only have a friendly word of warning for anyone who ever finds themselves the subject of a CREEM Profile.

As evidenced by these never before seen photos of The Damned, the potency of Boy Howdy! beer is not to be taken lightly. This is what happened after the band accidentally inhaled the brew's intoxicating aroma. Others weren't as lucky. We all remember how Grace Slick compulsively exposed herself after taking just one sip. And who can ever forget the grisly sight of Keith Richards, flat on his back and pie-eyed after chugging down an entire can? The poor bastard's never been the same since.

So if the day ever comes when one of our scantily clad CREEM hostesses slides a cold non-recyclable aluminum can of greatness into your hand prior to being photographed, please remember to treat that Boy Howdy! beer with the respect it deserves. Pose responsibly.

ROBERT MATHEU

# THE SECRET HISTORY OF QUEEN

BY RICK JOHNSON • AUGUST 1981 • PHOTO BY NEAL PRESTON

## TIME CAPSULE OR HAZARDOUS WASTES?

**1968** Freddie Mercury meets Brian May and Roger Taylor (then members of the group Smile) in Art School. Brian first heard to say "Freddie! Not in front of the *company*!"

**1970** Smile splits up after releasing one single ("Earth"). Brian asks Freddie if he wants to start a new band. "Do octopi have suckers?" Fred replies.

**1971** "Lucky" seventh bass player, John Deacon, joins up. Excitement level reaches #4. *Bullet Maintenance.*

**1972** Queen meets Roy Thomas Baker, who, along with John Anthony, produces demos for the band that help them land a contract with EMI. Anthony later pleads "diminished responsibility."

**1973** Debut album proves to be as popular as minimizing civilian casualties. "Around the rime and out,"sez CREEM.

**1974** *Queen II* released. You remember, the one with the black side and the white side that're both on the *wrong* side? "Soft core pomp," sez CREEM.

Queen supports Mott the Hoople at New York's Uris Theatre as the first rock bands to play Broadway.

Brian May's annual attack of hepatitis forces early cancellation. Although his guitar style is considered rather *treacly* at this point, you know what they say—good kelp is so hard to find.

QII voted album of the year in Japan. The prize" front row seats at the creation of Pink Lady. "Can I lick the spoon?" asks Freddie.

*Sheer Heart Attack* recorded for 25,00 pounds sterling (about $1.79 in U.S. funds).

"Killer Queen" is an international smasheroo. Joe Fernbacher thinks "orgone bleats" for the first time.

**1975** *Night At the Opera* released. "Poignancy at its cutest," sez CREEM.

"Bohemian Rhapsody" squats at the top of the U.K. charts for seven weeks. Migration officials begin working overtime.

*New Musical Express* readers pick Queen as "Best Stage Band" and "Bohemian Rhapsody" as "Best Single." But he group itself remains the #2 band after Led Zep. This is about as big a deal as being the second most beloved woman in Argentina.

More awards from *NME;* First Annual Jobriath Memorial Award for bing "last band to make it off the glam-rock bandwagon. "First Annual Freddie Mercury I've Got-A-Tiger-In-My-Trousers Award goes to Jim Dandy!

Sept. CREEM DREEM appearance temporarily appeases the sun-suit set.

**1976** "This year, I can at least sit up!" boasts Freddie.

Group cans previous management and signs on the Elton John's manager, John Reid. "So what?" say many.

At promo bash for the group, Bette Midler punches out then-Mr. Big of radio programming, Paul Drew, for reputedly saying her record is "as quaint an idea as researching as article."

*News Of The World* unleashes "We Are The Champions/We Will Rock You" on unsuspecting public. Snuffbrats everywhere rejoice, but CREEM insists that "Queen is the Sha Na Na of rock's modern age."

Joe Zdeb bats .297.

Study shows that one out of every two American families has at least one member who suffers from motion sickness.

**1978** *Jazz* LP becomes most ignored effort by major act since Tanya Tucker's attempted suicide. "A parody of their own uselessness," sez CREEM.

Joe Zdeb's batting average slips to .252.

"Today the pond, tomorrow the world!" promo for the movie *Frogs* becomes Queen fans' battle cry.

**1979** *Live Killers* released, including controversial pre-taped version of "Boho Rhapsody." "A typically uncompromising move," sez the liner notes. *"Oh, what a first!"* as they say in the new biodegradable tampon ads.

"Makes you feel like someone is peeing on your grave," sez CREEM.

Public response to purchasing a live album that features tapes from previous LPs? Well, if words could deep-fry, Queen would now be a pile of onion rings.

**1980** *The Game* is the group's best-selling album yet. Looks like Merc and the boys have their heels on the pulse of the nation. "Gutless and artificial," sez CREEM.

"Another One Bites the Dust" reaches ridiculous heights of popularity for a song that sounds like Trigger counting to six.

Detroit Loins adopt "Dust" as theme song and promptly lose five games in a row.

**1981** *Flash Gordon* soundtrack released: becomes biggest selling soundtrack album with a yellow cover in first fiscal quarter of '81. "If Freddie Mercury is ever in a movie," CREEM meant to say, "the female lead will be Jamie Lee Curtis."

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## THE NINE JUICIEST RUMORS ABOUT QUEEN

1. Brian to leave and join Sparks.
2. Before settling on Queen, other names considered included Princess Phones, The Thinkophants, Genotype Cointoss and The John Deacon Experience.
3. Brian to leave and join Kool and the Gang?
4. It was *Freddie* that tossed the cherry bomb which almost blinded Steven Tyler.
5. Billie Jean King and Freddie boy an item? Wait'll he finds out what a strong backhand *really* is.
6. Brian to leave and join Doobie Bros.?
7. Almost 17 years ago, young Fredrico's dentist *forgot to tell him to rinse* and he still hasn't!
8. John Deacon is dead.
9. John Deacon isn't dead. ■

# Star's Cars

## BILLY GIBBONS/Z.Z. TOP

October 1981
Photo by Bob Alford

Well, hey there, sweetie pie. This here's the niftiest vehicle anyone this side of Texarkana's ever done seen. Why this is a car of all trades, so to speak—good for taxi service, trips to the moon . . . Whaddaya mean, a *space cadet*? This is one fine machine, honey cakes. So you just put on your gray bonnet, and I'll trim this growth that's hangin' from my chin here and brush some of the dirt off my clothes. Ol' Bessie's hitched to the shay, and we'll just mosey on along before those men in the funny white coats how up again . . .

BACK FROM THE MOON
WELCOME
TAXI

Z.Z. Top came to town for a performance with livestock and groupies in tow. They sent a limo to the CREEM offices that took a co-editor and myself to dinner at a very pricey steakhouse. Upon arrival at the steakhouse, huge bouquets of flowers and matchbooks that read ZZ TOP WELCOMES CREEM adorned our table. We went to the show, after which we were escorted backstage for drinks and giggles, then herded into a limo for their hotel for an after-party, then led to the hotel bar for yet another gathering. We were finally able to persuade them to take us back to the office to pick up our cars at 5 a.m. the next morning.

—Linda Barber Roach

# WENDY AND THE PLASMATICS

## 1984 WILL BE A LITTLE EARLY

NAUGHTY CATHOLIC GIRLS SHAVED BY EDOUARD DAUPHIN
SEPTEMBER 1981 • PHOTO BY ROBERT MATHEU

Time: The present? Maybe last Spring. Place: The sun dappled garden. The Dauphin sits in his maroon Barca-Lounge chair, which the nuns have graciously allowed him to take from the game room, absorbing the late afternoon rays, cream-colored Panama hat tugged down over his eyes, waiting for the Angelus bells to ring. Dauph is as peaceful as he ever gets these days. Suddenly, the pastoral calm is shattered as a voice sounds out, just behind his left ear. Sister Bernadette whispers a message.

"M. Dauphin," she begins.

"More Thorazine?" The Dauph asks hopefully.

"No, you naughty Frenchman," she rejoins mockingly. "A phone call. Mr. DiMartino from CREEM. He says he has a great idea."

The Dauphin freezes.

Flashback: London, October 1980. The Portobello Hotel. Dauph, overseas on a strictly private matter, is staying in room 35, which happens to be next to room 34, where Dave DiMartino, ostensibly on a Rockpile junket, happens to be lodged. Since Edouard had not told Dave D. of his plans to visit England, it seems an extraordinary coincidence that they should find each other installed in adjoining rooms in the same small hotel. Dave D. shrugs it off. (For his version of this supposedly chance meeting cf. Feb. 1981 CREEM.) Back then, Dave has a great idea too. He suggests that The Dauphin realign his sleeping pattern in Room 35 so as to place his slumbering body in a different position. North to South, East to West, it is all the same to a drowsy Dauph—until the electrical currents begin attacking his body. Yes. it's true, Dave D., mild-mannered reporter for this very magazine, is in fact, the mastermind of a plot to drive electrical shocks into the body of the sleeping Dauphin. And he's doing it from behind the wall of Room 34!

The Dauphin snaps out of his freeze. The kindly nun leads him inside to the phone and hands him the receiver.

"Hey Dauph," bubbles the voice, long distance from Birmingham, "hate to bother you at the nuthouse . . . "

"The sanitarium"

"Sure, whatever you call it, but, listen, I got a great idea."

"I already sent in the column—last month."

"Right, but this isn't movies, it's music. See, we want to do a feature on

The Plasmatics. We had an editorial meeting to see who should write it and. . .

"Mine was the only name that came up," says The Dauph knowingly.

"How'd ya guess?"

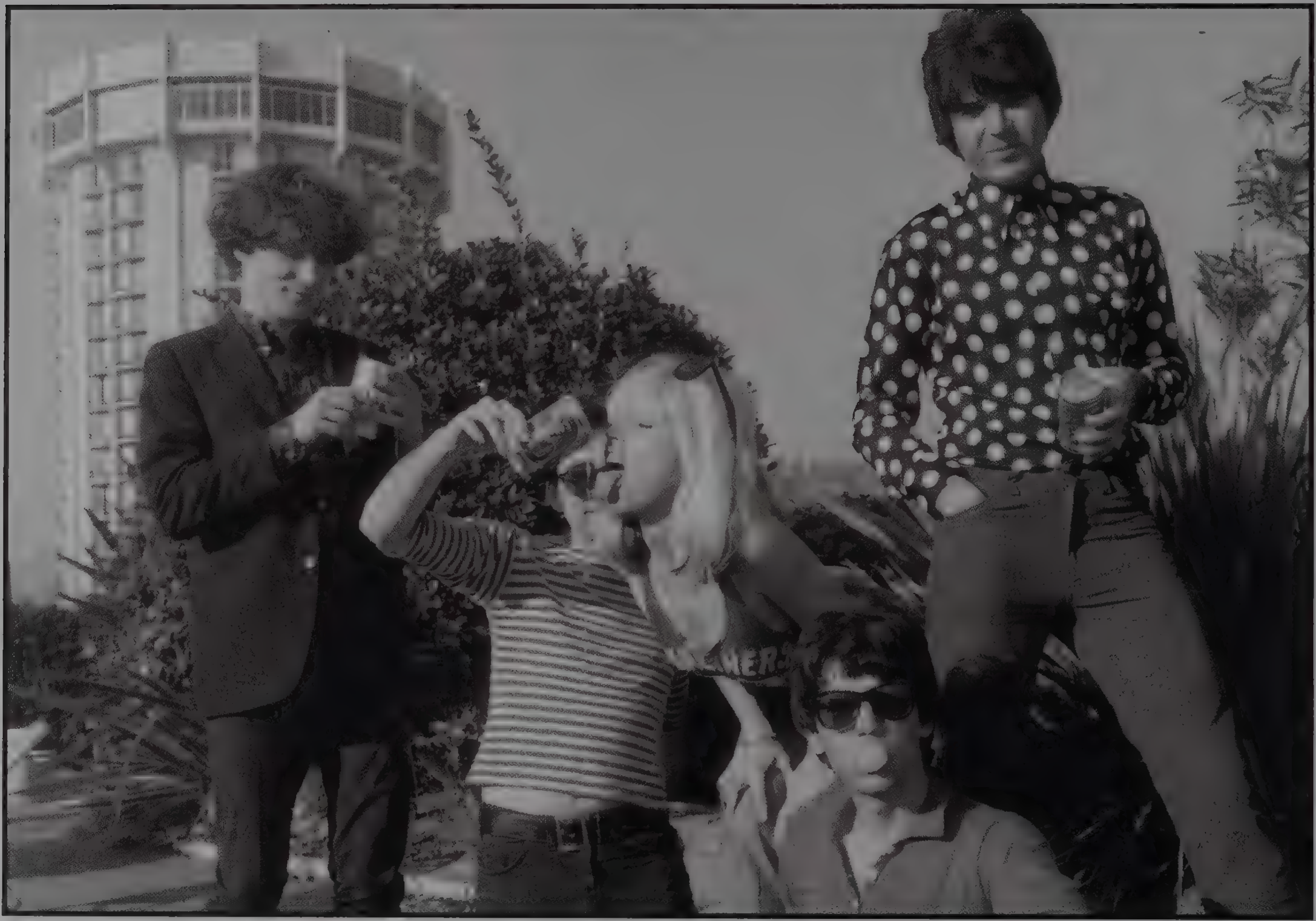
Flashback: Genya Ravan's NYC flat, New Year's Eve, 1979. The Dauphin attends a party, is greeted at the door by rock 'n' roll legend Genya who tells him someone is there that he must meet. She steers the wary Edouard across the living room and introduces him to a tall, statuesque blonde attired in the flimsiest of lingerie and looking like a life-sized ad for Frederick's Of Burbank. This, of course, is Wendy O. Williams.

"Dauph, you there?" the voice on the phone asks. "This is costing money. We had to call you person to person."

Flashback: Max's Kansas City, February, 1979. The weather outside is frightful, but Max's is not so delightful. The Plasmatics are playing one of their first ever NYC dates. Dauph attends, drugged, furious at being nabbed by perfunctory door weapons check. Frisked of his arms, he sulks down front in the aisle next to some Marxist coed from CCNY. Wendy and the band take the stage. Horror movie garish brilliance. Deafening sound.

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")



SUZAN CARSON

## BLONDIE

**HOME:** On the ceiling of every teenage boy's bedroom.

**AGE:** 126 beats per minute.

**PROFESSION:** Sublimating psycho-sexual urges by performing songs about giant ants.

**HOBBIES:** Understating the obvious while overstating the sensational; stalking Nancy Sinatra, Jr. for hot new fashion tips; looking out for number one (with a bullet).

**LAST BOOK READ:** *The Wind In The Willows Hits Alphaville* by Justin Other Memory.

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Having their pizza and eating it, too.

**QUOTE:** "Thank you for coming . . . to our show."

**PROFILE:** This fun group of guys and gal have proved that ripping people to shreds can be profitable in more ways than one. Recipe: mix taste with trash, throw in a few glass hearts and cook for three albums. Stir occasionally, remove from oven and eat to the beat.

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

**Authentic** There are zillion ways to

*The trend in rock 'n' roll periodicals by the mid-'70s was as confused and mixed up as the music represented. Anyone looking back at old rock magazines will be amazed at how chaotic they are. Out of the sea of madness rose perhaps the most crazy: CREEM.*

*Perfect sense that it would follow in the mold of Mad Magazine which we all had spent our childhood with, that and comic book culture in general infused its pages with identification for Blondie.*

*—Chris Stein*

Wendy, fierce and Amazon-like, charges the crowd. For the first time in ages—a clear and present danger to the audience. Lead guitarist Richie Stotts sports a shocking blue Mohawk and, yes, he's really wearing a white tutu. Wendy takes a menacing chainsaw to a still playing guitar and slices it neatly in half. The Marxist coed stalks out in a huff, muttering about capitalist decadence. Later that night, at the bar, we learn that Sid Vicious is dead.

"Dauph," says the voice on the line, "I know you're there. I can hear you breathing."

"Yeah, I'm here," mumbles Edouard.

"Okay, here's the deal. You write a feature on The Plasmatics, you get your regular fee plus expenses, a car to take you to and from the funny farm . . . "

"We call it an institute for living."

"Of course. And, let's see, you get your byline, we spell your name right and we furnish you with an unlimited supply of illegal absinthe."

"Done."

A few nights later, Bond's International Casino, a block long dance palace at the crossroads of the world, is the site of what has been billed as The Plasmatics' only NYC concert this year. Dauph slinks in just after midnight, reflecting that the last time he was on these premises, Bond's was a gigantic men's clothing store and he was in a blue dacron sports jacket for his high school graduation lawn party. Ascending the art deco staircase, the years seem to fall away and Edouard is an awkward, acned teenager once more. He heads directly for the bar.

Bond's is packed with white suburbans. The bridge and tunnel crowd is out in force. Somehow this is not what one expects for a group whose songs include "Living Dead," "Test Tube Babies," "Sex Junkie," and "Pig Is A Pig." Or maybe it is. Bond's is not Max's Kansas City and the admission price alone puts it off limits to many of the band's earlier fans. Nothing should be surprising. An ex-host of General Electric Theatre is in the White House and The Plasmatics themselves boast of being on their 1984 World Tour.

The Dauphin slumps into the corner of a silver sofa and casts his dilated pupils upon the stage, dominated by a sedan emblazoned with the insignia of the Milwaukee Police Department. Recalling that Wendy faces a jury trial in that Shlitz-kicker burg, charged with obscenity and assaulting a police officer, one gets the feeling that massive damage will be done to that vehicle before the night is out. Good. Dauph has never shied away from willful destruction.

A good 90 minutes past the appointed hour, it's finally time for The Plasmatics. The crowd on the immense Bond's floor surges forward for a good view; there will be very little dancing to the likes of "Masterplan" and "Hitman." No great loss. Who wants to dance when you can press up against 2,000 sweaty people inches away from titanic speakers that blast a high-decibel massage directly into your medulla oblongata? And all this while you watch the most visually bizarre and exciting group since . . . since who? Did Jack The Ripper have a band? How about Attila The Hun? Rasputin?

Wendy is wearing tight black pants and an almost non-existent bra, with masking tape and clothespins on her nipples. Later in the set, she will exit the stage briefly and return nude to the waist except for strategically applied gobs of whipped cream. During the two hour performance, she will systematically take a sledgehammer to a television set (made some nice sparks), annihilate an electric guitar and explode the Milwaukee cop car, reducing it to a pile of rubble that would bring Lee Iacocca to tears. Needless to say, the Bond's crowd greets the boom of the automobile's demolition with a roar of approval. Edouard surveys the debris, takes a tug on his absinthe flask and heads backstage.

Wait, O Exalted Dauphin, you're probably saying—what about the music? Fair question. Musically The Plasmatics are raw and relentless, drawing on the basic three chord formula used with less distinction by many other new wave groups. But, with their determined, brain-battering attack and unflagging good humor, at least they're minus the posturings of Heavy Metal acts like Rush, AC/DC and Ted Nugent. (With their fake intensity and tortured showmanship, these guys are the real punks!) On the other end of the spectrum, The Plasmatics hardly invite comparisons with the virtuosos of today or yesterday. Or do they? As Wendy has been heard to say, referring to Stotts' propensity for whacking himself over the skull with his instrument "Richie makes music with his head much like Jimi Hendrix did with his teeth."

Backstage, though the smoke of explosives lingers in the air, things are pretty calm. Wendy, already changed into a black t-shirt, with all traces of Reddi-Whip presumably licked away, accepts congratulations with a demure, almost innocent air. Bass guitarist Jean Beauvoir smiles shyly in recognition and Richie Stotts, complimented on his playing, murmurs a quiet thanks and rubs his tattooed dome thoughtfully. The Dauphin, always uncomfortable in a backstage situation, where security guards are likely to be around, slips quietly into the night.

Next Wednesday. Studio 3A at NBC headquarters in Rockefeller Center is home to Tom Snyder's *Tomorrow* show and tonight it is also home to Wendy O. & The Plasmatics. Dauph, perturbed at being summoned out in public this early in the day—it is, after all, only 6 p.m.—lurches to his seat, intent on dozing off during the opening guest, a yoyo lawyer from the South who wants to pass legislation against violence in hockey (the only reason to watch this dumb game).

It's no use. Flashing lights and applause signs make it impossible to drift off. The Dauphin trains his beady eyes on the stage as the show's taping begins, relieved, at least, by the announcement that the studio audience will be spared having to watch the Rona Barrett segment from Hollywood. The anti-violence nut speaks his piece and is neatly pillored by Tom, who is inordinately tall, keeps a teddy bear on the set and is a little too fond of it for his own good. Plus, he just happens to be from Milwaukee.

The band's arrival ignites a wild reception from the crowd, composed almost entirely of Plasmatics fans. Wendy and company whip through a quick number before she joins Tom for an interview. Dressed in a virginal white blouse and checkered miniskirt, Wendy resembles a Catholic high school girl who somehow fell in with bad companions. (And if you believe that one, The Dauph has some seaside lots in New Jersey you may want to buy sight unseen.)

Tom's 10 minutes of banter with Wendy is like a love match. Her run-ins with the law and legal difficulties are scarcely touched upon. Actually, the big lug seems more interested in finding how Wendy could ever bring herself to hammer a TV set into electron heaven. The unasked question, enough to furrow Tom's brow, is: What if I, Tom Snyder, were on that screen at the moment of impact? The question asked is: Instead of doing something so negative, wouldn't you like to give a TV a big kiss? "Oh, come on, Tom," replies Wendy with a jovial grin as if to say: I thought you were in show business . . .

. . . The following afternoon. The jangling telephone rouses Edouard from a deep sleep. Plasmatics producer/manager Rod Swenson is disgustingly wide awake.

"Dauph, a slight problem. Wendy's at the doctor's. She may have broken her hand."

"Er, what?"

"Last night, on the Snyder show, she injured her hand."

"Er, what?"

"Wendy might be an hour late to meet you."

Dauph rubs his fists into his eyeballs. "Listen," Rod objects. "Wendy hurts herself—all the time. She never says anything. She ignores pain. Wendy's extremely organized. If she has an appointment to meet you, nothing—not even a broken hand—will get in the way."

"Er, what?"

The same day. Dusk. The Dauphin is in an unfamiliar, even alien setting, a health food restaurant in the bowels of Soho. Wendy wanders in, brandishing a ridiculously swathed finger. No hand has been broken, there has merely been a minor sprain. Edouard sucks on a straw attached to an absinthe flask concealed in his jacket as the lady orders a chamomile tea.

"So," begins the Dauphin, "there's no truth to the rumor that Rex Humbard tried to break your hand."

Wendy laughs. "Rex was alright. I went up to him before the taping and said: 'Rex, you are loved.' He said: 'You are loved too, Wendy. I think what you're doing is great.' He gave me a 'You Are Loved' pin, then he looked at what I was wearing and said: 'I don't know where you're going to put it.' This guy's on a great trip!"

"You weren't exactly loved in Cleveland."

She shakes her head. "Cleveland I never took seriously at all. We had two local lawyers defending us who made Abbott and Costello look like wizards. It was a real kangaroo court but the jury had to listen to the rantings and ravings of the prosecution. The new D.A. there is called, are you ready, Jose Feliciano. It wound up that we didn't even present a defense."

"Did you find it hard to sit there and behave in a court of law?"

"Who said I behaved? I didn't behave. I caused a ruckus in the courtroom. Cleveland is third in the country in rapes and fifth in murders. The D.A. was afraid of the real criminals so he took a cheap shot at me. Because I'm a woman. I look different. I have a Mohawk. And I'm upset at the status quo."

"What do you mean you look different?"

"Let's put it this way. When I walk by a construction site, the hard-hats can't believe their eyes. They ring all the bells. They beep all the beepers."

"Do you ever worry about provoking people by your attitude or the way you look?"

Wendy grins, then looks thoughtful. "When I go into a new town sometimes, I wonder if the police will shoot me."

"Especially after Milwaukee, right?"

"Right. In Milwaukee, the cops asked me to step outside. One of them grabbed my tits. Another one grabbed my rear end. So I smacked them. Then they threw me down and handcuffed me hogstyle in the snow while one of them beat me. I'd have gone along peacefully, but I was outraged intellectually."

"When you do a show, does it ever get violent out in the audience?"

Wendy takes a sip of tea. "We went to Hamburg. The promoter told us beforehand: 'If they don't like you, they'll run you off the stage.' I said: 'No one runs us off the stage.' The show starts. I look out into the audience and the place is filled with leather boys. Some of these guys were 60 years old! I mean these were not day trippers—they had leather up the ass! Then I notice this one leather boy right in front of the stage and he looks like the toughest one of all. He's orchestrating the whole group. He's controlling them, wielding a cat o' nine tails. They didn't bother us at all. We did a great show. I love being scared."

A waitress comes by on her way to the kitchen. "You were great on TV last night," she compliments.

"Thanks," says Wendy with a bright smile.

The Dauphin comments on the strong rapport The Plasmatics seem to have with their fans. Both at Bond's and at the Snyder taping, the band's followers exhibited a loyalty that was unwavering but surprisingly gentle and almost protective. Wendy nods in agreement. She has noticed this too and, in discussing one of The Plasmatics' ultimate objectives, she shows an appreciation for the communal nature of rock 'n' roll concerts that recalls the festivals of years gone by.

"We'd like to do five concerts a year, outdoors, and make them only accessible by mule train. During the concert, it would be like we'd created our own city. Then, after the concert, we'd level the city to the ground and everyone would have to leave by mule train. We want to be able to build a city and destroy it . . ."

". . . But that's in the future," continues Wendy. "I could never think, say, five years ahead. I'm right for the moment. Immediate gratification."

"Have you always felt that way?" The Dauphin asks, returning to reality.

"Pretty much so. Even as a kid. I've always been kind of an anarchist. When I was growing up, I just wouldn't go for what everyone was shoving down my throat."

Dauph recalls a story Rod Swenson had told him about Wendy & The Plasmatics being barred from performing in Britain due to governmental fears that by blowing up a car they might injure the audience or provoke a riot. "I hear you're banned in England," he begins.

Wendy's genial expression turns fierce.

"England is run by monkey-brained Fascist farts. We don't wanta play there."

Dauph decides to change the subject. He asks Wendy about heroes. She pauses to reflect.

"Most of my heroes have always been men," she says. "Men were the ones that were having all the fun. I guess my three big heroes were Jimi Hendrix, Jim Morrison and Jackson Pollock."

We talk about living in New York, her everyday existence. She likes the city. She jogs daily and works out in a Manhattan health club. She strikes The Dauphin as very much her own person—a rather private person. She agrees with this assessment.

"I'm just so into what I'm doing so much. I don't even have a phone."

"Does that mean you're happy?"

Wendy flashes a dazzling smile. "I've never been so happy in my life. But I still want more of everything . . ."

. . . Time: The present? Maybe early June. Place: The sun-drenched garden. The Dauphin is back in his maroon Barca-Lounge chair, just lolling in the sun. Suddenly, the tranquil peace is violated as a voice sounds out, just behind his right ear. Sister Bernadette conveys yet another message.

"M. Dauphin," she begins.

"More Placadil?" The Dauph asks optimistically (It is their little game.)

"No, you mischievous boulevardier," she retorts girlishly. "A phone call. A lady named Tara from Stiff Records."

"Did she say what it was about?"

"She only left a message. All charges against Wendy in Milwaukee have been dropped."

Dauph smiles. "Thanks."

"Don't mention it," says the nun, heading back toward the patio.

"Sister Bernadette?" calls Edouard. The nun stops. She looks back.

"Yes, M. Dauphin?"

Edouard regards her with an amiable gaze. "You were right. There is a God." ■

# CREEM

**"Hey, if Joan can do it, so can I," says Lita Ford, one of Joan Jett's partners in crime in that ancient rock tribe known as the Runaways. Whereas Joan fleshed out the glitter rock star trip of the early '70s, Ms. Ford decided to flesh out other aspects of the rock trip, if you catch our drift, adding a little make-up, a lotta hair, and coming on as your prime heavy metal mama. Still, one passionate question prevails in the male CREEM editiors' dirty little minds: "Whatever happened to Jackie Fox?"**

PHOTO BY ROBERT MATHEU

# CREEM DREEM

LITA FORD JULY 1983

# CREEM

# CREEM'S PROFILES
(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")

BOB ALFORD

## CHEAP TRICK

**HOME:** Cheap tricks *always* stay in cheap hotels.

**AGE:** As follow: Rick—cartoon stage; Robin—all grown-up and going to boy/girl parties; Tom—achieving gonadic maturity; Bun E.—full Rotary Club membership.

**PROFESSION:** Ex-stock boys, pin setters, and teenage waitress pinchers; now professional pick-spitting poseurs.

**HOBBIES:** Vacationing near nuclear test sites; scraping solidified sweat from concert hall floors for use making records; forcefully clothing every man, woman and child in America with their t-shirt garments; sending away for Christian marital aids.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *Son Of Stan Lee* by the Mad Peck.

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Slept together in one bed without any evidence of lunar secretions.

**QUOTE:** "Nick Lowe likes us. You will, too!"

**PROFILE:** Obscuro riff-raff with a penchant for audio-tweaking pubescent breasts, these guys still twitch with deep-seated claustrophobia from their 6.2 million consecutive cookie box concerts. A true personification of the odds 'n' sodomies school of Mungo Jerryism set to electrical outlets. Hubba hubba.

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

BOY HOWDY!
CREEM

***Authentic*** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

BOY HOWDY! ™

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**

# BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN TAKES IT TO THE RIVER

BY DAVE DIMARTINO • JANUARY 1981 • PHOTO BY ROBERT MATHEU

**All things good come to he who waits; he who hesitates is lost. For every stupid cliché there's another one out there equally stupid that means the opposite, a fact of life that nobody forgets as they grow older, and a fact that nobody out there should ever *want* to forget.**

**And so it is with Bruce Springsteen, who either waited or hesitated, according to who you talk to, and whose long-awaited "comeback" means more to more people now than it ever did before. His comeback, of course, is *The River*, two discs of working class angst and fury no doubt already memorized in college dormitories and better homes throughout the country. "The Boss" returns, the legions chant, and—this time, at least—they're right. Because Bruce Springsteen has returned: he's returned to doing what he likes best (playing) for those he likes best (his fans) *with* who he likes best (his band). And the fact that it's taken him so long to do it is, well, *too bad*. Because it's been worth it.**

You could write a book about Bruce Springsteen. Face it, somebody already has. Springsteen's long and glorious career has been huffed about ad nauseum in CREEM, *Rolling Stone*, *Time* & *Newsweek*, radio specials, *No Nukes* reviews, "Heroes Of Rock 'n' Roll" TV specials and places even your grandmother would notice if she really looked. And the fact that he's met such enthusiastic reception everywhere has probably become a bigger albatross around his neck than any quickie "rock 'n' roll future" quote could ever be, mainly because—as far as being set up goes—he *couldn't be in worse shape*. It's common knowledge: set 'em up and knock 'em down. The reason Bowie's tune " 'Heroes' " has those quotation marks around its title says it all; there *are* no more heroes. Because nobody wants them.

Yet here's Bruce Springsteen, hero. Waiting to be knocked down. And he probably will be—critically speaking, it's too much of a temptation *not* to knock Springsteen at this point, with hordes of "BROOOOCEE!!"—chanting fans growing larger by the minute, a two-year wait between albums (this time *without* legal hassles) and a gnawing feeling that this James Deanish last-angry-man stance is beginning to reek of political conservatism and other things you'll probably be reading about elsewhere. And of course all this is bullshit . . .

. . . And you know the story after that. Two years later, here's Bruce Springsteen in Detroit again, this time touring to promote *The River* which, on this Thursday night, won't even be in the stores until the following Monday. It's very early into what promises to be the longest tour yet: almost a full year of being on the road, time enough for the unfamiliar songs the Detroit fans hear to become old favorites by the time Their Hero returns. Time enough for a lot of things to happen.

And it wouldn't be a Bruce Springsteen concert if it wasn't an endurance test. As usual, though, it's Springsteen & his band who'll have to endure; this time almost *four hours*, with a brief intermission for the band while the audience in Cobo Hall refuels on beer and more. The Springsteen concert is an "event" in the way concerts by The Stones, The Who and even Led Zeppelin are: instant sell-outs, scalpers hawking tickets outside and smug looks on those inside who'll be telling friends tomorrow what they missed.

Wisely, the band begins with "Thunder Road." The audience stands, sings along, chants "BROOOOCEE!" at the song's end and, or course, loves it all. Old favorites continue, Springsteen knows the audience needs reassurance before he wheels out the new stuff that no one in Detroit's ever heard before. When he finally does, though, it makes no difference; still "BROOOCE!" The audience keeps screaming 'til four hours later, when the final score is "Quarter To Three" and Springsteen struts offstage, ready for tomorrow night's encore in Chicago. Ten more months or so and it'll finally be all over . . .

. . .Backstage, it's the usual. The local CBS man is playing traffic cop, directing the flow of concert hangers-on, industry people and local radio celebs who've come back to "meet The Boss" and are wearing appropriate passes visibly on their person. And the fact that Springsteen is such a real-and-true Good Guy makes things even more problematic: he'd never dream of not facing his public, be it radio bigwigs or the little guys, cold and waiting outside at the stage door. Unspoken, but not unfelt, is the sentiment that if Bruce Springsteen ever dies it will be of terminal niceness, "*He Was A Nice Guy*" his perfect tombstone epitaph.

When we finally reach the inner sanctum, Springsteen's manager Jon Landau greets us. He smiles and says "No more than a half-hour, OK? *Please*?" making it obvious that, indeed, if Springsteen's niceness weren't enough, the guy also likes to talk, which in these days of Johns Lennon and Lydon is no small concern. Inside the dressing room, CBS man Westcott is finishing up presenting the radio royalty to Springsteen, and the man who looked ten feet tall and heroic onstage now looks merely short, tired and diplomatic. "Nice to meet you all," he says, and he obviously means it.

Eventually, The CBS man and crew leave, and the E Street Band is brought in for a series of quick CREEM photos. "No point in keepin' *these* guys up," Springsteen says, and it's a quick reminder that the interview to come will appropriately take place at Quarter To Three in the morning. Some things, I guess, you just can't escape.

As the band cruises out, Springsteen shuffles over to a nearby couch, the room quickly empties and the tape recorder is turned on. A final Springsteen higher up enters the dressing room, asks "Hey Boss, you want a soda or something?" and soon leaves.

Thus I can't help but ask immediately: "You mean they *all* call you 'Boss'?" and Springsteen cracks up.

"Well the thing I have with this 'Boss' is funny," says he, his voice something out of *Mean Streets*, hoarse and filled with "dese"s and "dose"s. "'Cause like it came from people like *that*, who work around me. And then somebody started to do it on the radio. It's funny, cuz . . ." He makes a face. "I hate being *called* 'Boss.' " He laughs; we laugh. "I just do. Always *did*, from the beginning. I *hate* bosses. I hate bein' *called* a boss. Everybody says 'Hey Boss,' and I say 'No. Bruce, *Bruce!*'

We laugh again and sit back, and I regale the man who hates being called "The Boss" with a story Bob Seger told CREEM earlier this year. We'd asked Seger what the major delay had been with *Against The Wind*, and he'd started talking about song selection and balance, about him wanting the album to "feel right." He'd told us he'd been watching Springsteen record *The River*. "You should see Springsteen," he told us. "He's goin' through the same movie right now. He's pullin' his hair out . . ."

"Yeah," Springsteen laughs, "right. Well, from the beginning I had an idea of what I felt the record should be. And I don't think . . . I'm not interested in going in the studio and . . ." He pauses, considering. "I don't want to just take up space on the shelf, ya know? Or worry that if you don't have something out every six months, or even a year, that people are going to forget about you. I was never interested in approaching it in that way. I've never been, from the beginning. I just have a feeling about the best I can do at a particular time, ya

### *HOW TO INSULT A BIG STAR*

*Backstage at the Bruce Springsteen concert (Masonic Temple, Detroit. September 1978.)*

***Me:** How old are you?*

***Bruce:** (Grinning) How old do you think I am?*

***Me:** Oh, about 32.*

***Bruce:** (eyes bulging) I'M 26 YEARS OLD!*

*—Linda Barber Roach*

know? And that's what I wanted to *do*. And I don't come out until I feel that that's what I've done. Because there's so many records coming out, and there's so much stuff on the shelves. Why put out something that you don't feel is what it should *be*?

"And I don't believe in tomorrows, that 'Oh, I'll put the other half out six months from now.' You may be *dead*, you just don't know. You make your record like it's the last record you'll ever make. You go out and play at night—I don't think 'If I don't play good tonight at least I played good *last* night.' It's like there are no tomorrows or yesterdays. There's only right now."...

..."I've opened for Black Oak Arkansas," he says, shaking his head. "I've opened for Brownsville Station, and I've opened for Sha Na Na. I'm *31*—and I've been playing in bars since I was 15. And I've faced a lot of audiences that don't give a *shit* that you're onstage. And if you're calling percentages, we've had two to five percent total nights like tonight against maybe 95% in the 10 or 15 years we've been playing. Lemme tell you, that *did not happen* then and that does not happen *now*. . . . And it keeps you from *ever* getting spoiled, because you know what it's like when nobody gives a damn when you come out there. It keeps you in a certain place, it stays with you. There's no free rides.

"When we first started playing, I'd go to every show expecting nobody to come, and I'd go onstage expecting nobody to give me anything for free. And that's the way you have to play. If you don't play like that, pack your guitar up, throw it in the trash can and go home, fix televisions or some other line of work, ya know? Do something where that's the way you feel about it. And the night I stop thinking that way, that's the night I won't do it anymore, 'cause that's just the bottom line.

"I don't gauge the show by the audience reaction, I don't gauge the show by the review in the paper the next day, I *know* when I get on the bus to go to the next town. I know if I can go to sleep easy that night. That's the way we judge it and that's the way we run it. And if we *didn't* it wouldn't be happening in the first place."

. . . If you want to start talking about "types" of Springsteen tunes, reasonably one can suggest there are two major kinds: happy, upbeat songs like "Rosalita" and "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out," joyful Life-Is-Great-Now ditties, and "sad," downbeat songs like "Racing In The Streets" or "Something In The Night," moving Life-Ain't-So-Great-Now ditties. The basics *E Street Shuffle/ Darkness* dichotomy. And apparently Springsteen sees it the same way:

"When I did *The River*, I tried to accept the fact that, you know, the world is a paradox, and that's the way it is. And the only thing you can do with a paradox is live with it."

"And I wanted to do that this time out, I wanted to live with particular conflicting emotions. Because I always, personally, in a funny kind of way, lean toward the *Darkness* kind of material—and when I didn't put the album out in 1979 it was because I didn't feel that that was *there*. I felt it was something where I just got a bigger picture of what things *are*, of the way things work, and I tried to just learn to be able to live with that."

So I'm gonna listen to *The River* when I get it next Monday and I'm gonna feel that paradox you're talking about?

"I think so," Springsteen says. "In the end, I think that's the emotion. What I wanted was just the paradox of those things. There's a lot of idealistic stuff on there, there's a lot of stuff that, hey, you can listen to it and laugh at it or whatever. Some of it is very idealistic, and I wanted that *all* on there. At first I wasn't gonna put it all on there, ya know?

"I saw it as romantic. It's a romantic record—and to me 'romantic' is when you see the realities, and when you *understand* the realities, but you also see the possibilities. And sometimes you write about things as they are, and sometimes you write about 'em as they should be, as they could be, maybe. And that's basically what I wanted to do, ya know? And you can't say no to either thing. If you say no, you're cheating yourself out of feelings that *are* important and should be a part of you."

. . . And I guess one of the biggest questions remains: does Springsteen anticipate any sort of critical or commercial backlash at this point with *The River*? It's been two years since he's last been heard from—time enough for even some of his oldest friends to turn their backs on him.

Springsteen looks doubtful. "That stuff happens all the time," he says. "Besides that's happened to me already, I've *lived that* already. And it's the kinda thing that just happens. People write good things and then they don't. The first time I went through that, it was confusing for me, it was disheartening. And I guess I felt that I knew what I wanted to do, and what I was about. It's just the same old story—where I was 25 when that first happened and I'd already been playing for ten years. Now I'm 31, and I've been through that."

"When you first come up, and people start writing about you, you're just not used to it. It's just strange. There were a lot of things that brought me real down at the time, and there were a lot of things that brought me real up. I was very susceptible to being immediately emotionally affected by something like that at the time. But like I went *through* it, I saw it happen, I saw how it happens. I was younger then, and much more insecure. I hadn't put the time in that we've put in since then. I've seen all sides of the music thing and now—whatever happens now is only gonna be a *shadow* of that moment, ya know?

"So if a lotta people wrote a lotta good stuff and then they wrote a lotta bad stuff—whatever happens, it happens. You have a concern about it, 'cause I spent a long time and you put a lot into doing a record. It's the same ol' story, anybody who says it ain't a heartbreaker, it ain't *true*, ya know?"

He laughs.

"But that's the way things *are*, ya know? And I'm at a point where I've got a better perspective about a lot of these things."

We've already flipped the C-90 over, which means it's been over 45 minutes and Springsteen keeps talking, obviously exhausted, but determined to answer all our questions. In all decency, we can't ask any more without overstaying our welcome; ironically though, the last question we ask might easily have been the first. It's certainly the most basic. We ask Bruce Springsteen if he's happy. Happy with his music, his life and himself.

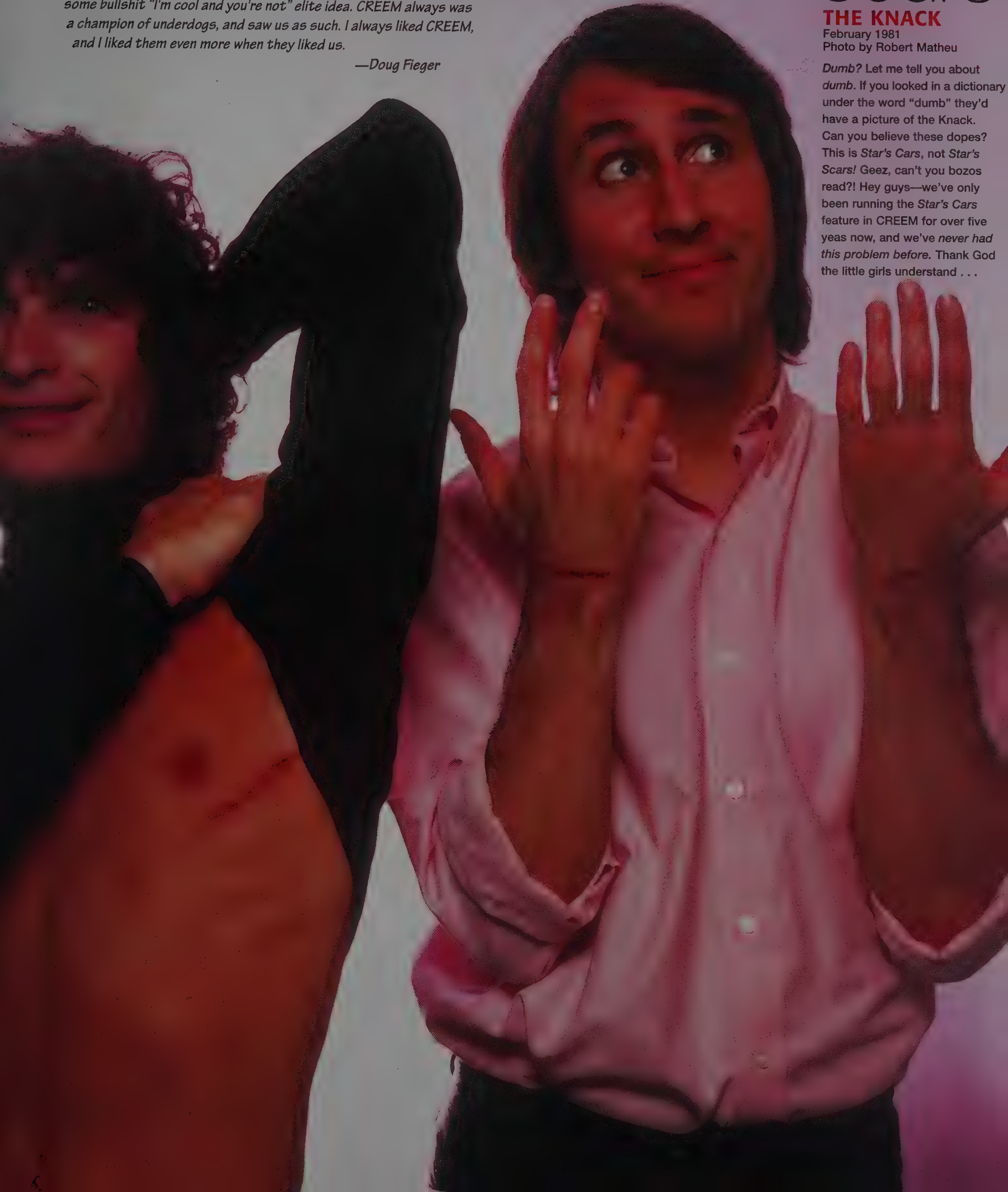
His answer: "Yeah. 'Cause if I felt that if I was just sitting there and squeezing the life outta the music, I wouldn't do it. But that's not what happens, that's not what we do. The physical act is not what takes the time—I mean, this was our fifth album, and when we rented the studio we knew how to make a record. As fast or slow as we wanted to, right? The physical thing is not the story. Just how you feel inside about it. And *that* don't run on any clock. Just how you feel inside, just where you are today and what your record is gonna be saying out there, and what the people that buy that record are gonna feel and get from it.

"And I had an idea, and I wasn't gonna go halfway with it. Wasn't a point in it. Like I said, I don't trust no tomorrows or that kind of thing. And I'd rather *do the time*—and the time is no fun to do—'cause if I didn't do the time *there*, I couldn't walk out there on the stage."

"We're gonna be playing a lot of shows, and we're just gonna be out there for a real long time. And when I go out there at night, I just like to feel. . . like *myself*. And like I've done what I have to do. And when I play those songs onstage, I *know* those songs, I know what went into 'em and I know where I stand. And people will like it and people will not like it, but I know that it's real. I know that it's *there*."

When we finally leave Cobo Arena, it's four in the morning and the Springsteen crew is boarding various busses, readying for the five-hour drive to Chicago. As we close the stage door behind us, we see 30 or so fans outside, copies of *Born To Run* and *Darkness* in hand, all waiting in this early morning hour for a glimpse of and maybe a quick conversation with Springsteen. The fans wait, we leave, and it's a sure bet that much later, when a tired Bruce Springsteen opens the backstage door, he'll have 30 more conversations waiting for him before he finally makes it to his bus.

And Springsteen, no doubt, wouldn't have it any other way. ■



*OH WHERE HAS MY UNDERDOG GONE?*

*Detroit was always considered kind of a backwater, but I always considered it closer to the heart and soul of what rock 'n' roll was all about. Because it hailed from Detroit, CREEM was much more balanced and much more fair and much more connected to a real audience-not some bullshit "I'm cool and you're not" elite idea. CREEM always was a champion of underdogs, and saw us as such. I always liked CREEM, and I liked them even more when they liked us.*

*—Doug Fieger*

# Star's Scars

## THE KNACK

February 1981
Photo by Robert Matheu

*Dumb?* Let me tell you about *dumb*. If you looked in a dictionary under the word "dumb" they'd have a picture of the Knack. Can you believe these dopes? This is *Star's Cars*, not *Star's Scars!* Geez, can't you bozos read?! Hey guys—we've only been running the *Star's Cars* feature in CREEM for over five yeas now, and we've *never had this problem before.* Thank God the little girls understand . . .

# MORE OF AN OUTLAW THAN YOU EVER WERE?

## (Hold The Mayo On The Golden Globe Awards)

by Richard Riegel • March 1982
Photos by Robert Matheu

*"But this is just for the interview, you know, when they want to do interviews in places like Omaha, or in Cincinnati, man, you know. I don't do it and then they write bad things."*

—*Bob Dylan, 1965, quoted in* The Rolling Stone Interviews, Vol. 2

Hiya from Cincinnati, Bob. Not that I really expected any special interview dispensations from your Dylanness, after all, not when you've made yourself inaccessible to much more powerful journalists than me, for more years than I've even been writing. Still, Columbia was hinting that your renewed openness to your public on this *Shot Of Love* tour just might lead you to concede an audience or two along the line, and if the Red Sea of your defense mechanisms happened to part in Cincinnati, by God I was gonna be *there*, to take it on the lam right into the psychic kibbutz of your Promised-Land soul.

No tough questions, either, Bob. Main reason I wanted to talk to you was to tell you it was fine by me if you *didn't* grant me an interview. See, I heard your recent WNEW interview when it was rebroadcast on WAIF here, and I don't blame you for putting on that oh-so-serious fellow, for strumming your guitar with ever-louder "SPROING!"'s, to drown out his boring-newsber queries about What's-your-relationship-with-organized-religion? And Where-do-you-stand-on-social-protest-today? Etc., etc. I didn't want to know any of that stuff about you even in the '60s—you had already answered my own seeker priorities, *sex* and *revenge*, for good, on *Blonde On Blonde*—and I'm still satisfied that your politics can take care of themselves.

Nah, Bob, I was just plain fascinated by the WNEW piece's exposition of your virtuoso interviewee *style*, so reminiscent of my eight-year-old daughter, Sarah (a fellow Midwestern-Jewish Gemini wunderkind, by the way), and of her characteristic evasions of my and my wife's wicked interrogations, e.g., "Have you cleaned up your room yet, Sarah?" And she counters with something approximating those prose-poem liner notes you put on *Highway 61 Revisited*, plenty of mental bubble gum for us to masticate while we end up dragging her dusty toys out from under her bed.

In other words, I'd love to have you confront me just once, Bob, simply to see what kind of mind games you might run on me, just to sit there in happy amazement, uttering silent-hipster "Go man, go!"'s, as you reduced my wormy rockcritic soul to less than zero, no limit.

But no interview this time, that's no problem either, Bob. Write bad things about you? Never! After all, Bob, wasn't it you who taught me this writer's credo—"You only kid the ones you love"—way back when?. . . ■

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")

BOB ALFORD

## DEVO

**HOME:** The Wiggly (Not So) Beautiful World.

**AGE:** Shriveling up.

**PROFESSION:** Coal mining spud boys.

**HOBBIES:** Collecting space junk, satisfying uncontrollable urges, playing with "Mr. Potatohead," composing corporate anthems, finding love without anger, de-evolving.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *Whip It* by the Marquis de Sade.

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Encouraging fans to look as ridiculous as *they* do!

**QUOTE:** "Slap yo mammy down!"

**PROFILE:** Rising from the industrial wasteland and spudland capital of Akron, Ohio, these blockheads took Darwin's theories in reverse, offering America the sound of things falling apart, and giving Mongoloids everywhere a new purpose and cause.

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

BOY HOWDY!
Creem

***Authentic*** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**

# DURAN DURAN

## OH! YOU PRETTY THINGS FROM PLANET EARTH

BY TOBY GOLDSTEIN • JANUARY 1983

PHOTO BY FIN COSTELLO

We journalists like to believe our opinions are graven in stone. Let's face it, in the global scheme of things, the relative power of a critic's poison pen is rather limp. It ain't gonna lower the price of a gallon of gas or revamp foreign policy. So we get our kicks playing deity with those benighted souls who think they're going to earn a living and crate great art by recording rock 'n' roll.

Take the case of yours truly vs. Duran Duran—five barely-over-teenage English boys, most of them too handsome for their own good, whose first single to reach American ears was a perfectly acceptable catchy dance tune called "Planet Earth." The somewhat nervously wisecracking quintet met the New York press two days after they set foot in the U.S., by being herded into a Capitol Records meeting room under posters proclaiming "England's New Romantic Rebels." Uh-oh, guys.

We'd already withstood and largely dismissed the pose-with-a-rose antics of Steve Strange, Spandau Ballet, et. al. and certainly didn't require any more spiffily coiffed, expertly made-up marble statues from the motherland . . .

. . . Said press conference flew into an uproar when my offended sensibilities prompted me to abuse the band—for their supposedly escapist attitude as part of the New Romantic movement, for their tasteless video, possibly even for their physical attractiveness, which seemed like just another part of a calculated product. Instant group—just add water and stir to a synthesized beat. Considering that encounter after a year had passed, in retrospect the only aspect of Duran Duran I didn't plow apart was the group's music, and it was through that one small overlooked item that they completely redeemed themselves in my eyes.

Throughout their second American tour, a lengthy enterprise which combined headlining dates with support shows for Blondie, Duran Duran used New York as one of their home bases. They began in July with a tumultuous show at Pier 84, managing to humanize an odious pit that at the best of times feels like a rock 'n' roll prison . . .

. . . By the time the group concluded the Blondie tour at Toronto's CNE Stadium in late August, Duran Duran had honed their control of a crowd to an even more efficient edge. "Do you have any idea what it feels like up here when everyone gets up and dances?" gleefully yelled LeBon to the audience, who in response leapt around to "Hungry Like The Wolf" and "Rio." The band's power proved so inescapable that Debbie Harry acknowledged on stage that night "Duran Duran gave me a hard act to follow."

As their exhilaration at a successful tour blended with the exhaustion of over two months criss-crossing America, sporty-looking LeBon and dramatically black-clad, fedora'd keyboardist Nick Rhodes cadged French fries and derived much pleasure watching the same critic who they clearly remembered as distupter do everything but ask to join their fan club. They were mature enough to enjoy a friendly disagreement about that infamous video, and to admit how difficult it's been for Duran Duran to grow away from their original packaging.

"It's taken us the whole year since you saw us to get away from that image," emphasized Simon, whose clipped accent revealed a London education, unlike Nick's earthier Birmingham tones and guitarist Andy Taylor's indecipherable Newcastle inflections. "You have to keep banging your head against the brick wall and chip it away, bit by bit. To make sure you work enough so that people will hear of you. There's no magical instant exposure anymore in the way the Beatles had it, because there's so many more bands around. And alas, people were prepared to play the Beatles stuff. They're not so willing now.

"And I don't blame the radio (for being cautious)," says LeBon, without rancor. "'New Romantic' is such a lightweight phrase that radio stations were frightened of it, because they thought, this is gonna go for a week and sink the week after. And they're interested in bands that are going to be making records in a couple of years' time, at least. People they can play and back up and talk about."

Rhodes cynically adds, "Back then the whole image was forced upon us. We got here and even the bloody record company had those posters up. We couldn't believe it." Simon: "Especially after all the hard work we put into England to get people to call us by our own name, for us to come over here and the exact thing happens—we went OH-MY-GOD-THIS-IS-REALLY-BAD. We spent a good deal of THIS tour explaining ourselves to people."

Admittedly, a group whose average age was 19 when they released *Duran Duran* in 1981 could be excused for getting enmeshed in an ongoing trend. And their tension resulting from inexperience is understandable a year down the line. Rhodes and LeBon are well aware of how insecure the group used to be and the benefits they've gained from the hard job of touring.

"It's the reason the second album is so much better than the first," declares LeBon proudly. "When John and Roger went into the studio to put down the original bass and drum tracks on Rio, they were so tight from touring that everything was absolutely spot-on instead of nearly spot-on. We had gained confidence by the end of that first U.S. tour. It's like a kid being thrown in at the deep end of a swimming pool. You struggle for a while and then you learn. (Or drown.) Also," he says cheerfully, "success obviously helps you relax a little more."

Neither Simon nor Nick feels apologetic about Duran Duran's breakthrough at a young age (the oldest member is now 23). "So are lots of British bands at the moment," they said. "Haircut 100 are the same age as us." Unlike their American counterparts, apparently British musicians don't have to wait until they're on Social Security or dead before they get a fair shake on the airwaves.

While the "Girls On Film" video may have increased pubic awareness of Duran Duran through controversy, it's inarguable that the phenomenal success of the Human League and Soft Cell, two bands who managed to break free of labels, opened this year's floodgates for eager dance-oriented performers. And Duran Duran, whose records have so far been less immediately accessible than those two hit-making units, far surpass them in presentation.

"Why us?" Simon responds, "Because we're five individuals for a start. We're not spotty, three-foot-tall hunchbacks, which gives us the image—the Beatles were good-looking. It does help, especially if you're talking about young girls. Also, things, getting different shades of emotion through to people so they can identify with us." That attitude is a vast improvement over the band's early days, when they shakily defended being a simple refuge. They obviously learned that bubbleheadedness imposes rather severe limitations upon growth.

Duran Duran's increased depth is as much evidenced by the videos done to promote "Rio" as by the band's summer tour. Location work in Sri Lanka and Antigua provided lush, mysterious enhancement for the group's tightly wound music, complementing the insistence of "Hungry Like the Wolf" or the desperation of "Last Chance of the Stairway." Though Rhodes off-handedly remarks that they're going to make a film and call it "Yelp," ho-ho-ho, Duran Duran are seriously looking to intensify their performances with equally compelling visual images. For instance, Antigua was the backdrop for the recent filming of "Night Boat,' a track on their first album.

Recalls Simon, "We filmed some very dusty, rural scenes with e five of us sitting on this slipway it was almost like a garage for boats, much the same feeling as *Summer of '42*. We added some natural dialogue, then a couple of us slipped into monologues. And it showed, as the night fell, how things got weirder and weirder until you've got this ghost ship with zombies aboard, attacking members of the group." LeBon smiles with contentment at another job well done. His introduction was so theatrically convincing, the result of years of Shakespearean training, that I believed we were still under daylight.

LeBon's expression merely hinted at the possibilities still caged within Duran Duran. Sometimes admitting mistakes is not such a bad thing to do on planet earth. ■

# THE KINKS: A SAD KOMMENTARY

BY JOHN MENDELSSOHN • AUGUST 1983 • PHOTOS BY ROBERT MATHEU

**Assuming that a healthy percentage of it carried falsified ID, the average age of the audience at this year's Los Angeles Kinks concert might have been 20. But the average IQ must have been three or four times that.**

**Behold the Kinks' new konstituency.**

**They littered the parking lot with shattered liquor bottles, did the members of this audience, and filled the restroom sinks with puke. Having apparently partied with all their might on the way to the Fabulous Forum, the home of the Los Angeles Lakers and Kings, a lot of them lay moaning and mumbling in the aisles once they finally got there.**

**The average age of the audience at this year's Los Angeles Kinks concert having been 20 means that its average member wasn't yet old enough for nursery school when "You Really Got Me" came out, and was in about the third grade when "Lola" set a shocked world to trying to figure out whether its heroine were really its hero.**

**But at least one member of the Forum audience that night—the one in orange velour tie—was old enough to have been a Kinks fan from the night during Christmas vacation in 1964 when "You Really Got Me" got him so excited when it came on his car radio for the first time that he nearly made a complete mess of one of lower Sunset Blvd.'s more treacherous curves, and consequently nearly didn't: report back for the rest of his senior year, graduate without honors (how could he continue to overachieve in the classrooms of his high school when there was a British Invasion raging outside?), and grow up to be the rock critic the West Coast most loved to loathe.**

For that old chap, who'd adored the Kinks for seven of the best years of his life (and who, in his 30s, had developed a penchant for the melodramatic turn of phrase), the concert was sort of an Altamont of the soul.

In his day, the old chap had been famous for his love of the Kinks. That he was much *more* famous for his love of the Kinks than he was for his own music did indeed frustrate him. But he took consolation in the feeling that there was scarcely a more wonderful group in rock with which to be so relentlessly associated. They were alternately funny and touching, ever tuneful, and their lyrics explored a constellation of concerns—social ecology, if you will—that no other group had ever thought to.

And they made such exquisite noises. For instance, people invariably think of the Beach Boys when the subject of pop harmony singing comes up, but nothing they ever recorded approached the Kinks' "Waterloo Sunset" in the gorgeousness of its choral ooh-ing.

There'd been a time too when the old chap hadn't just adored the group's music, but also felt the most intense affinity to the guy who wrote and sang it.

Five years after he barely avoided crashing his car on one of lower Sunset Blvd's more treacherous curves, he found himself doing much freelance writing for the Kinks' record company, largely on the basis of the rapturous things he'd writen about them in his college newspaper.

A woman he'd loved had broken his heart a couple of months before, and it hadn't yet shown signs of recovering. In one of the self-torturing gestures that characterized that period of his squandered youth, he'd moved into that part of his city in which there was always something there to remind him.

Having rigged his phone so that he could make calls, but not receive them, he went days without speaking to anyone, days just watching the inmates of the convalescent hospital across the walk for hours on end from his second-story window. Days just wandering, as though invisible, among the human debris that littered the beachfront 30 seconds to the west. Whole days under headphones, listening five and six times in a row (thank you for the daze) to *Tommy* and *the Stooges* and especially the Kinks' *Arthur*—that astonishing collection of songs about the frustrations of English working class life that Davies sang with sufficient passion and rage to make one who'd never even been to England, and knew nothing of class, tremble with indignation.

There'd been no more agonizingly lonely and purposeless a time in the Kinks fan's life. So when the Company flew him to Manhattan to greet the Kinks and convey to them how pleased it was that they'd deigned to tour American markets for the first time in four years, it seemed to him, with his flair for self-dramatization, to be saving his life.

He clung to his friendship with Ray Davies as though to a life preserver in a furious sea. As demanding of attention as the most neurotic groupie, starstruck beyond any recognition of propriety, he could hardly be pried from the Davies side, even when it came time, for instance, for the group to go gladhand local program directors. There was even an embarrassing confrontation with the Company's L.A. promotion man.

Davies himself, two years the fan's senior, but wiser by several eons, seemed to recognize that he'd somehow been stuck with the job of making his fan's life worth living, but uttered not a syllable of protest, was never anything but patient and magnanimous. Indeed, it was he, to whose comfort both its combatants were ostensibly committed, who defused The Confrontation in a way that spared the fan what might have been a fatal amount of embarrassment.

This was no ordinary rock star.

When he'd come to the Company's Burbank offices earlier in the year, Ray had worn an orange velour tie of which he was clearly fond. And only fittingly, thought his fan, who was convinced that in his entire lifetime he'd seen no more wonderful a garment.

It took Davies about five seconds, once he realized how his fan loved it, to make him a gift of it.

This was no ordinary rock star.

The friendship dissipated shortly thereafter, but the fan's love for the group endured even after Davies ceased to be rock's most melodic humanist—a dealer in the most extraordinarily *touching*, compassionate songs—and became instead a writer of tedious laments about the life of the touring musician, and then an indefatigable rockoperamonger. The fan's love endured in the face of these appalling developments because no one else in rock had ever seemed more his audience's friend onstage than Ray Davies, nor any group, in an age of ever greater fascination with technology and technique, more blissfully near to chaos from first bar to last than the Kinks, those wonderful slobs of drum and fretboard.

But they got greedy. They wanted a hit so bad that they made a disco record. They wanted a hit so bad that they cannibalized their own repertoire (as in the woeful "Destroyer"). They wanted a hit so bad that they cannibalized *others'* repertoires (as in the woeful "Catch Me Now I'm Falling," the only notable thing about which is how brazenly it appropriates the riff of "Jumpin' Jack Flash").

They got no hit, but after Van Halen launched themselves with "You Really Got Me," they came to be perceived as sufficiently . . . *awesome* . . . by association to quit playing venues where one could feel the warmth of Ray Davies's (it's pronounced "Davis") personality even from the cheap seats, and to set up shop in the sorts of venues to which their fans are admitted only after goons from local college athletic teams pat them down for weapons. (The *old* fan often wonders if his resenting that sort of thing means he doesn't understand rock 'n' roll anymore.)

Playing in arenas which God had intended for basketball and Journey, they felt compelled to crank up the volume and sustain on their guitar amps to the point at which they remained distinguishable from other favorites of the circuit mostly by virtue of neither Ray nor Brother Dave having the . . . awesome . . . chops that are the arena genre's stock in trade.

They were ordinary rock stars. And less the Kinks anymore than XTC were.

The fan in the orange velour tie was as saddened by their Forum show as those around him—especially the conscious ones—seemed to be gladdened by it. He'd never felt older than he did as he made his way through the shattered Jack Daniels bottles and back to his car. On whose radio he never seems to hear anything quite as exciting these days. ■

CREEM

# JOHN COUGAR
# PINK HOUSES
# IN THE MIDWEST

by Bill Holdship • January 1984 • Photo by Bob Alford

**My stomach was in my throat again, and I was seriously contemplating murder. The victim would be editor-in-chief of the rag you presently hold in your hands.**

**"How about a free trip to interview John Cougar?" he'd asked. "Great!" was my initial reply. In the past, *CREEM* writers had been sent to Paris, London, Memphis and even Jamaica to interview rock stars, so imagine my excitement when I discovered that Polygram Records had bought me a round-trip ticket to that swinging megalopolis known as *Bloomington, Indiana* (Whoopee! We're going to paint the town red tonight!). DiMartino had once flown to Puerto Rico to interview Loverboy, and they were sending me to the middle of a fucking cornfield!**

**To add insult to injury, I soon discovered that only one off-brand airline (if you wanna call it that), comprised entirely of propeller planes, flies into the Bloomington airport (if you wanna call it that). More thrilling than any ride at Cedar Point or Coney Island, it was definitely a rock 'n' roll experience–what you might call the "Buddy Holly Special." My stomach was still queasy from the 102 fever that had kept me in bed the entire previous weekend (the world isn't against me–just nature), and as the elderly woman behind me gasped and grabbed my seat every time we hit an air-pocket, I began thinking Catholic, vowing I'd return to the church if I just got on the ground in one piece. After that, I'd kill my editor.**

But seriously, if you're going to interview John Cougar Mellencamp (he's officially added his real surname to the unwanted stage name ex-manager Tony DeFries gave him a decade ago), where better to do it than Bloomington, his natural habitat? You've surely heard the story by now of the rock 'n' roll star who stays true to his Midwest roots, refusing to go Hollywood or New York, choosing instead to remain the small hometown boy made good–all of which sounds like a brilliant public image concocted by some slick New York press agent.

I first met Cougar in 1979, when he was still a fledgling rock performer with a new LP, *John Cougar*–a cut from which Pat Benatar had just recorded and got on the radio–and I was still a fledgling rock critic for a university newspaper. Cougar proved to be an exceptional live performer, playing in a small room for several hundred people, and I humbly predicted in print he was going to be a BIG star. What struck me most at the time of that interview was how humble and modest he appeared. He was genuinely embarrassed when I complimented him, saying he wasn't really interested in being a rock star and was "just learning to crawl as a songwriter."

But that was four years ago. Since then, Cougar has become a star, scoring the biggest-selling LP of 1982 with *American Fool*, not to mention three of the year's biggest singles, countless hours on MTV, and numerous record industry awards. Surely, this success would change any sane person, and last year it appeared that the pressures of stardom were finally getting to him when he received bad press for throwing a temper tantrum onstage during a Canadian gig, reportedly hurtling a drumset into the audience and injuring several people. A few weeks later, his name was in the papers again after he mumbled obscenities at a reporter for *CBS Newswatch* and stormed off the set. "That arrogant jerk" is what more than one person said when I mentioned I was going to interview him, so perhaps I originally went to Bloomington not to praise Cougar but to bury him.

These initial suspicions seemed confirmed when Cougar picked me up at my motel in a stunning 1963 Corvette Stingray. "Ah ha!" I thought. "The trappings of rock stardom!" But damn if he still didn't seem to be a pretty nice guy. We drove to "The Shack"–Cougar's rehearsal/recording studio, an unfinished farmhouse in the center of Indiana cornfields, where he recorded both his new LP, *Uh-Huh*, and Mitch Ryder's recent *Never Kick A Sleeping Dog*. I met the band, saw his new videos for "Crumblin' Down" and "Pink Houses" (which are far above the average dreck seen on MTV; Cougar makes excellent videos, and he's recently had numerous offers to direct videos for other artists), and watched them rehearse for an appearance on *Saturday Night Live* that coming weekend.

As the day wore on, the realization struck that I was wrong–success hasn't changed John Cougar at all. As odd as it may sound, both Cougar and his band appear to have *no* ego whatsoever. They get along and relate like old friends–which is what they are–and Cougar still acts like the regular guy you may have hung out with in high school or the guy who worked at the gas station in your hometown. Perhaps some of the "arrogance" claims derive from the fact that Cougar isn't afraid to say what's on his mind, prefacing many statements with "Maybe I shouldn't be telling you this," and then telling it anyway. Maybe it's because he's reached a point in his career where he can do things his way "or I don't do it. I don't feel obligated to certain people the way I used to." But in this era of uppity "New Music" nausea, John Cougar In many ways appears to be what rock 'n' roll was originally *supposed* to be, regardless of whether you like his music or not–a populist form with no pretentions at all. And let's face it–the original rock star was a truck driver who, at least in the beginning, tried to remain true to his smalltime "hick" origins.

"I can't take success seriously," says Cougar. "This is just my job. This whole rock star trip and the image people create around it is bullshit.

When you put it in the right perspective, there's thousands of guys who've sold as many records as me, so it ain't no fucking big deal."

To illustrate his point of how meaningless ego is, Cougar speaks of a record company executive who argued with him, insisting that he (undeservingly) be credited as executive producer on a recent TV special Cougar and the band did for cable TV. "It was just a fucking *rock video*! If it were *Apocalypse Now*, it would have been different. But the bottom line was that it was a matter of ego, and no one probably noticed the credit in the end!

"It's like the old cliché–'All that glitters isn't gold.' It sounds horrible for me to say this, like I don't appreciate what I've got, but, ultimately, that's not what's most important. By doing what I've done, I now realize that–yeah, all right, I can own a '63 Corvette, and it's fun to drive on a sunny day, but before I owned it, I still had fun on those sunny days. It's not like this is *it*, people have to live to make money. I wouldn't trade my family and best friends for all the hit records, all the money, all the '63 Corvettes in the world. If I really had to choose, I'd say fuck it. You can have all this stuff.

"I don't take my career nearly as seriously as I used to. Back then, I was serious about everything–too serious, probably. I still want things to be right, don't get me wrong, but I don't worry about them. Three or four years ago, if we were doing a *Saturday Night Live*, we would have rehearsed for hours. We're going to be on TV, we gotta sound good! But now it's like, well, that's good enough. And by doing that, we keep it loose. We don't sound too polished or overdone. And that's the theory we live by in this band. Too much doesn't make it sound good."

Later in the day, Cougar took me to his home to meet his family and listen to the new LP, showing me the site of his infamous motorcycle accident in which he tore off his kneecap after skidding 45 feet on his stomach. ("It's slowed me down a bit. I'm afraid to drive my bike at night anymore.") It's a relatively modest house, considering it belongs to the first person since John Lennon to have a number one LP and two singles in the Top 10 simultaneously, and with the exception of numerous gold records and pictures of James Dean (which fans have sent him) everywhere you look, it could belong to anyone in the upper middle class bracket.

Cougar lives here with his wife, Vicki, his 13-year-old daughter from a previous marriage, Michelle, and an adorable two-year-old girl named Teddi Jo, who thinks her name is "Teddi Jo John Coogee shirt," and when corrected with the proper name of Mellencamp, joyfully exclaims "Teddi Jo Pancake!" Cougar is close to his family, and his whole outfit seems a family-run operation. In fact, I later discovered that Cil, the woman who drove me from and to the airport, was John's ex-wife, who still works for him in Bloomington. ("Just because you get divorced doesn't mean you have to be enemies," he states matter-of-factly.) He claims that success hasn't really had a drastic effect on his family.

"We don't really use the word 'success' around here. It's more like a temporary way of life or a high point in the career. But to be really honest, I don't think my kids would know if I was successful or not. As long as Michelle's been alive–I had her when I was 17, and I started making records right out of college–so I've always been making records as long as she can remember. Teddi Jo's only two, so she doesn't know what's going on. She's aware, but I think she thinks everyone's dad's on the radio. I think Michelle can probably remember when her mom and I lived in a house as big as this room before we got divorced. So I think she remembers that and arguments about money. But I think the biggest thing that affects her is . . . she's really afraid that her friends like her because I'm John Cougar. It's kind of sad. But she goes to public school here because I think that's best. No big deals. I try to play it down as much as possible."

*Uh-Huh* sounds like a pretty good album, better than *American Fool*–which I hardly rate as his best record, and Cougar seems to concur. "To be real honest, there's three good songs on that record, and the rest is just sort of filler. It was too labored over, too thought about, and it wasn't organic enough. The record company thought it would bomb, but I think the reason it took off was–not that the songs were better than my others–but people liked the sound of it, the 'bam-bam-bam' drums. It was a different sound." The new LP includes at least three hit singles–"Crumblin' Down," "Pink Houses" and the melodic "Authority Song," which he describes thematically as "our new version of 'I Fought The Law.'" The record also includes "Jackie O," a novelty tune he composed with John Prine, who he feels is "in the same league as Dylan as a songwriter."

Cougar and the band recorded 25 songs in 16 days for the record, 10 of which made it onto vinyl. They were looking for spontaneity–"the way we used to do demos"–and they wanted the mix to sound jumbled, similar to the Stones' *Exile On Main Street*, which he rates as one of his five all-time favorite LPs. In fact, the LP lists a special thanks to the Stones "for never taking the living room off the records when we were kids." Cougar attributes a lot of the sound to drummer Kenny Aronoff, who's "a jazz school drummer like Charlie Watts, and they both do this light touch thing with the hi-hat that most rock drummers don't do." To support the record, Cougar plans to embark on a short 20-city tour, playing mostly college towns and small halls that seat 4,000-5,000 people. "We're not ready to play big halls like we did last year. I mean, you pull out an acoustic guitar in one of those places, and half the audience is going 'What the fuck?'"

Cougar has taken a lot of flak from both critics and rock fans throughout his career for being everything from "fake" to "unhip." "John Cougar is an act that people talk about, but they don't really listen to," he says. "That's the way I feel about it. They either love me or hate me, which is pretty much the way it is. But I've read more about myself that I've never done or said that I've just kind of evolved into that sort of person." He often seems to be the rock star "hip" rock fans and critics love to hate, but consider this: When I saw Cougar perform in '79, his show featured cover versions of the Skyhooks' "You Only Like Me Because I'm Good In Bed," bits and pieces of "Honky Tonk Women," Van Morrison's "Domino" and "Land Of A Thousand Dances," a rockin' "Plastic Jesus" from the film *Cool Hand Luke*, and a powerhouse encore of Iggy's "Search & Destroy" that was many times better than the Sex Pistols' cover of "No Fun." Later during the interview, he impressed me with his impeccable taste in music, listing numerous R&B greats (James Brown, Sam & Dave, Motown, etc.), the Animals, Mitch Ryder, the Lovin' Spoonful, early Doors, Lou Reed & the Velvets, Bowie and Iggy Pop as his favorites. (His current fave rave is Prince.) Or consider Cougar's videos for his *Nothing Matters* LP which featured John Waters star Edith Massey, or his new "Pink Houses" video which lifts a scene directly from the Marion Brando/Tennessee Williams film, *The Fugitive Kind*. Not exactly "unhip" things.

Or consider this quote I took from the Dream Syndicate's Steve Wynn when he was berating the pretentious "New Music" mentality: "I think John Cougar is the best spokesman of our time. The guy's not fucking around. He says, 'Well, I'm an idiot, but I know what I like, and where I come from, people want to hear rock 'n' roll.' John Cougar's a better spokesman for our time than any art critic's band. I mean, what has Gang Of Four done for the heartlands of America that John Cougar hasn't done? Maybe 'Oh, yeah, life goes on long after the thrill of living is gone' is kind of a stupid thing to say, but it made a lot of people probably feel like 'OK, I've got some ground to stand on.' Of course, if you want to play for a cult following and just be a cult band for critics . . . but I think the point is to move as many people as you can."

Cougar was thrilled when I read him the quote. "That's great, because it's exactly how I feel. What's the sense of making records if people aren't going to listen to them? Let's face it: in the

CREEM

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")

ROBERT MATHEU

## THE GO-GO's

**HOME:** This town.

**AGE:** Their lips are sealed!

**PROFESSION:** Getting and keeping the beat.

**HOBBIES:** Listening to old Shangri-La's records, trying to stop the world, walking in their sleep, lusting to love, watching old Campbell Soup Twins commercials.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *Girls Can Rock!* by Phil Spector.

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Writing a surf song that the Ventures recorded!

**QUOTE:** "We're animals" —Gina Schock.

**PROFILE:** Rising from the "golden" state of slam dancing and mohawks, the Go-Go's went against the typical "I hate everything" L.A. stance to write and record teenage romance pop anthems, taking their debut LP to the top of the nation's charts.

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

***Authentic*** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

TM

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**

beginning John Cougar was the biggest joke in the music business. It's not like I don't know that. I understand that completely, but I think it's worked for my strength. To start out with such stupid, ignorant, ridiculous beginnings as I started with, and then to be able to still make records 10 years later. Here it is 1983, and a lot of the same critics have turned around and said, 'Well, John's changed his style, he's better now.' It's not true. I'm still doing the same old shit I've always done. It's just that people are willing to listen to the shit I'm putting out now. People are more open to what I do because—like Wynn said—be it how ever silly or stupid it may have sounded when I said it, I think a lot of people did connect to it . . ."

### SOME COUGAR COMMENTS:

(or I've got over three hours of interview tapes!):

### ON MITCH RYDER:

". . . Mitch was very serious about the whole project. I think he was afraid because he saw it as his one last break, and I don't see it that way at all. It's just another page in the Mitch Ryder story because he's the type of guy who's never going away. He doesn't know that about himself, but it's the truth. I think the record's done what it was supposed to do, and that was to let people know that Mitch is still an important force in rock 'n' roll. It hasn't been a huge seller, but it's got him back on the radio. He's got a great song, 'Bow Wow Wow Wow', on the new Was (Not Was) album. I originally thought we could use the song on our record together, and it was disappointing when we couldn't. But I liked that song so much that I opened some of my own concerts with it last year. I took Mitch on the American Music Awards with me last year, and that's the only reason I did the show. I originally told them 'No,' but then I made a deal. I said I'd do it, but I'm just going to be an appendage of Mitch Ryder."

### INTERESTING TRIVIA:

**(or my obligatory Lou Reed reference):**

"Lou Reed sent us a song to use on Mitch's record, but we couldn't because it was too weird. It was about a guy who kills his girlfriend because she's fucking around on him. Wasn't right for Mitch Ryder, we didn't think."

### ON THE "LITTLE BASTARD" MONIKER:

"That came about because I'd go in with these big producers, and I'd have to argue with them because they'd change my songs around. I heard one of them say, 'Well, that fucking John's a little bastard!'"

### ON "CRUMBLIN' DOWN":

"I was having problems after *American Fool* came out because all of a sudden I turned into the guy I hated—the guy who's on the radio all the time, and the guy dealing more with business sometimes than music. It was hard for me to deal with, and I think writing 'Crumblin' Down' helped me. Because when the walls come crumblin' down—when all the bigtime deals fall through—I'm still going to be 'the same old trouble you've been having for years.' So why the fuck are people treating me differently? What's the big deal? People seem to be more affected by what they think I am than I am about the whole thing myself."

### ON "PINK HOUSES":

"It's saying the American Dream and all that shit is propaganda. It's not rah, rah, rah America at all, and I think it puts America in its place. It's like the Russians shooting down that plane, and we want them to apologize. I'm not condoning what Russia did, but that's bullshit! There's so many things we've done, and then we expect them to apologize when we had a spy plane beside the plane that got shot down! Let's see the deal as it really was! And the majority of the public is going to fall right in line with the way Reagan wants them to think. I don't mean to get political, but I do get wound up about these kinds of things because so many people see it as it's really *not*. They believe the propaganda. And that's sort of what 'Pink Houses' is about."

### ON NEW YORK:

"I don't have any distaste for New York at all. I like New York. I just don't want to live there. I like going there because it's like Ma & Pa Kettle go to the big city. The big distaste I have is for the record business. That's why I'm so down on big companies and promoters, and I think that's why when the record companies talk about me, they say I'm too dangerous to deal with. They say that because I'm not going to kiss ass. I'm not a hard-ass. It's just if I feel something's wrong, I won't go along with it."

### ON DRUGS:

"If you want to stick needles in your arms, go ahead and fucking do it. You're the one that's going to pay the consequences. I don't think it's a good idea, and I sure don't advocate it, but I'm not going to judge people. Hell, if that was the case, you wouldn't like anyone in the music business because everyone's blowing cocaine."

### ON TONY DEFRIES RELEASING KID INSIDE:

"He suffered the repercussions, not me. If he'd have been smart about it, he'd have worked with us because I've got other records that never came out in America. We could've put together a compilation. But it was the way he did it. He released it right on the tail of *American Fool*, and it confused a lot of people."

### ON NEW WAVE:

"I had a kid come up to me in a record store, and he said, 'I don't like your music, but I want your autograph for my sister.' I asked what kind of music he liked, and he said punk and new wave. He was buying the New York Dolls album, and this was last year. I said 'So this is new wave?' He said 'Yeah!' I said, 'You know that record's only about 10 years old.' I was into that 10 years ago when it first came out. I was in a band called Trash that looked just like the Dolls. But I think it's good. Every kid should have an opportunity to go through something like that, whether it be hippies, glam rock, punk or whatever. But I was just in L.A., and all that new wave stuff has turned pretty manicured. There's no longer any substance in most of it. And that's why I stick so much to being a purist with the songwriting. Fads are great when you're a kid—I've had crazy haircuts, dyed orange—but when you get to a certain age, you have to find a direction. The things Bowie did were amazing because he never got away from songwriting. But now the cheaper models of these guys who copy Bowie forget that there was always a song in what he was doing."

### ON CRUDITY AND "SEXISM" IN HIS SONGS:

"I think it's almost a compliment. Let's take an old song like 'Maybelline.' Now what the fuck was that song about? I mean, that's what rock 'n' roll *is*. Sex is something we all talk about and we've thought about since the age of 10, and we'll think about until the day we die. So what's wrong with writing about it? If it's supposed to be degrading to me because I write about that, well then fuck it. I guess I am."

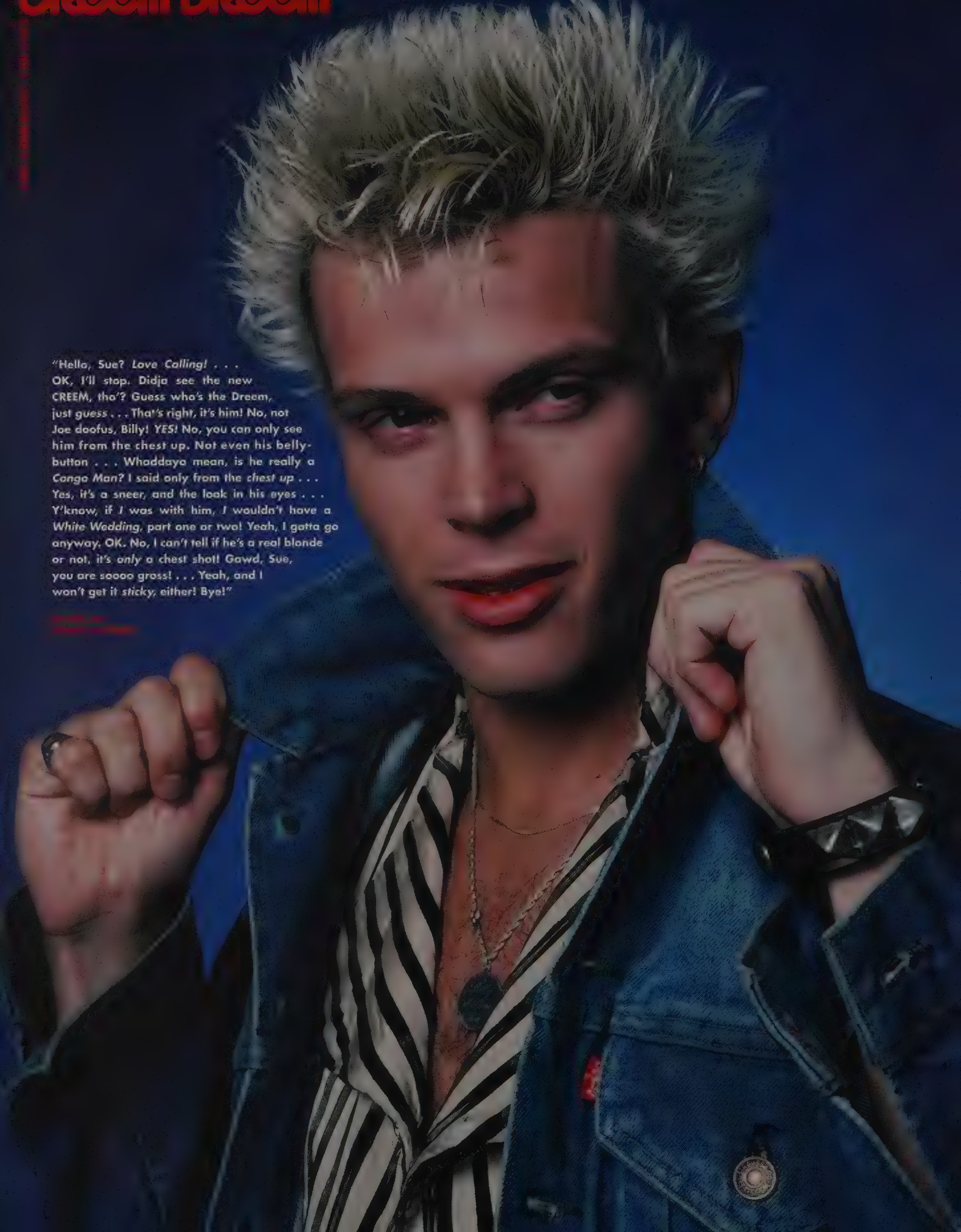
### ON EDDIE AND THE CRUISERS:

"I heard there's a movie out where the guy's supposed to look like me. Ugly fucker, eh? (*laughs*) Well, I hope he gets laid more than I do! I've had a few movie offers, but I'm really not interested. Maybe if the right people approached me, but the stuff I've been offered is stupid."

### ON THE PAST:

"Before I was in the business, I had zero drive. I was married with a kid, didn't have a job, didn't want a job. I was content staying home, throwing a frisbee in the morning, going out and sitting on the hood of a car in the afternoon, smoking cigarettes, doing dope, going home and eating dinner, and then listening to records at night. But I'd never be content doing that now. So that's the best thing about this career. It helps you get in contact with yourself." ■

# CREEM DREEM



"Hello, Sue? *Love Calling!* . . . OK, I'll stop. Didja see the new CREEM, tho'? Guess who's the Dreem, just *guess* . . . That's right, it's him! No, not Joe doofus, Billy! *YES!* No, you can only see him from the chest up. Not even his belly-button . . . Whaddaya mean, is he really a *Congo Man?* I said only from the *chest up* . . . Yes, it's a sneer, and the look in his eyes . . . Y'know, if *I* was with him, *I* wouldn't have a *White Wedding*, part one or two! Yeah, I gotta go anyway. OK. No, I can't tell if he's a real blonde or not, it's *only* a chest shot! Gawd, Sue, you are soooo gross! . . . Yeah, and I won't get it *sticky*, either! Bye!"

[illegible]

Rick's contribution to the CREEM legacy can't be understated. He was enormously appreciated by the readership, who regularly voted him their favorite rock critic in the magazine's annual readers' poll. And he was perhaps appreciated even more so by the editorial department—who repeatedly asked him to make something out of nothing via his thematic "think pieces" that required no interviews and, sometimes, no research at all. All that was required was that he be creative—and to say that was no problem is an almost laughable understatement. He was enormously dependable on nearly every level imaginable.

Rick's arrival in CREEM's Birmingham office in the mid-'80s came at a turbulent time in the magazine's evolution, one that has already been well documented. While he was there, he produced the piece that I still consider his finest—but then, I would, since I was there and I know how it happened. It was a cover piece featuring Michael Jackson and David Lee Roth titled "Duets From Hell," and its introduction details precisely how and why the piece came to be in the first place. It reads like fine Johnson parody, and the beauty of it is that is was, incredibly, straight fact. Who needed a punch line?

Rick was a warm, very sincere, very talented person whose writing influenced an entire generation of music and humor fans. No one has ever successfully imitated his writing style, and no one ever will. He deserved every accolade accorded him and more.

—*Dave DiMartino*

# DUETS FROM HELL!

by Rick Johnson • October 1984

# ONE TIMES ONE EQUALS SOME PAIR!

It was another typical afternoon at CREEM's posh eddytorial digs in luverly downtown Birmingham, Einsturzende Neubauten tapes blare, almost drowning out Bill Ho'ship, who is alternately hallering "He'p!" and "Yoohoo!" out the window at pedestrians below. Dave DiMartino has his face buried in the glacial wastleland of his desk, softly whimpering a sad song, the lyrics to which sound something very much like, " . . . drummm . . . supplement . . ." Eddytorial Assistant Ann Marie is up on her seat, screaming *"NO MO' AD COPY!* NO! I REFUSE! I WILL NOT WRITE THE WORDS 'WIN BIG' EVER AGAIN!"

Meanwhile, the author is slyly writing all this down between trips to his "private" office. Being a deranged Tab Addict—especially when the idea flow is down—and *never* being one to let a sleeping bladder lie, the author misses many of his fellow eddytors witticisms. He hopes.

Yes, these are desperate times. Deadline approacheth, as deadlines are wont, from "around the corner," to "almost there," way past "about *that time*, kiddies," right up to smack dab in the middle of DOOM DOOM DOOM. The only thing that elicits a smile from the misbegotten eddies at this point is the occasional hateful in-joke about "paying" the writers.

Suddenly, the sound of the eddytorial hatch being unbolted from the outside fills their hole with metallic scraping sounds not unlike what's playing in the tape deck, only much more melodic. The door swings open eerily, and several Mr. T-sized uniformed men rush in. After a quick sweep with metal detectors and a sawed off-staple remover, CREEM's Fearless Leader herself strolls in, views the slimy premises, somehow keeps her lunch down at the sight of what appears to be a cross between an Alien Sex Fiend dressing room and a maximium security Raoch Motel, and snaps, "attenshun!"

"Whudduh concept," mumbles the author as the motley eddy crew fumbles to their very best approximation of "attention." Looks like they're gonna need some pipe cleaners.

"I heard that new Michael Jackson/Mick Jagger record on the way in today," Fearless Leader begins (amidst barely audible groans of *"not again"* and *"Fluffo alert!"*), "and that's gonna be our next cover! What d'ya think, kids?"

"Wodnerful," says Dave.

"Excellent," says Bill.

"*Quite* excellent," says Ann Marie.

"Best idea *I've* ever heard," adds the ever brown-snouted author.

"OK, then do it, A.S.A.P.!" FL suggests in a somewhat forceful manner, pounding her fist on the author's head. *Kronk*, it goes, emptily. The bodyguard form a phalanx around Fearless and negotiate her through the free-fire saccharin zone safely.

"Guess that means we'll have to scrap that Butthole Surfers cover," complains Dave bitterly.

"May be we cane get Kordosh to interview the Jacksons' dog," suggests Ann Marie.

"What does A.S.A.P. mean?" wonders the author.

Meanwhile, Ho'ship is gingerly unwrapping a new razor blade. "Who wants first slit?" he asks.

The eddies, however, are silently grateful for the inspiration, which does not naturally occur in their environment. The author, in fact, is as grateful as a murder victim whose killer was caught from the skin found beneath the deceased's fingernails.

His fun reverie is shattered by the sound of his phone buzzing like a particularly objectionable answer on a game show. It's Fearless Leader again.

"And kids,' she suggests sweetly, "don't make it all filler this time, K-O?"

* * *

. . . *don't make it all filler this time*, the author writes.

Now, there are many ways of interpreting the concept of "filler." Does she mean *substance added to a product as to increase bulk, weight, viscosity, opacity, or strength?* Or perhaps *a composition used to fill in the pores and grain of wood or other surface before painting or varnishing?* Or how about *a piece or slice of boneless meat of fish?* Or sorry! That's *fillet!*

Just as author-face is thinking of different ways to express fillerous filler, bloated bloating, fluffy fluff, and/or *megamung*, the phone screeches again. Gotta oil that thing someday.

"Listen, kiddo," *uh-oh*, it's FL's voice. "I have changed my mind," she announces, exactly like Jethro Bodine in the famous Jethro's Magic Act episode of *Beverly Hillbillies*. "that Jagger and Jackson record's a *bomb*! I have a better idea—let's make it a Michael Jackson and David Lee Roth cover instead!"

"In a word brilliant!" says the author, clutching at his throat a though a noose was being tightened around it.

"And I want it today, or else I'll cancel your dry cleaning allowance!"

"You got it, boss!" sez me, ruminating on the unpredictable mechanics of genius. Either that or senility—he often confuses the two these days.

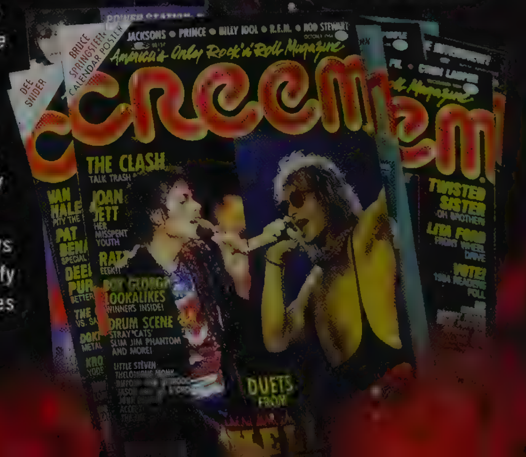
(TIME WARP: At this very moment in "real" time, one of CREEM's art jammers tiptoes up to the author's desk with this actual story in one hand and a bloodstained sledgehammer in the other.

"Hey, dirtball," she squeaks politely, "We need another 14 lines in the basket case of an intro."

"*14 lines?!*" wails Tabman with mock interest. "Haven't the readers already suffered enough?"

"*Fergit* those knuckleheads!" she announces with a wink, not knowing her every word is being added to the article. "We got *priorities!*" GAME OVER)

Hmm, now that we've got that settled, let's see . . . Sonny & Cher, Jan & Dean, the Righteous Brothers, Eurythmics, Dale & Grace, Friend & Lover, The Captain & Tennile, Chad & Jeremey, Ha;; & Oates, *Bachman-Turner Overdrive* . . . dunno about you, but this author does not want to even *think* about these people, much less write about them.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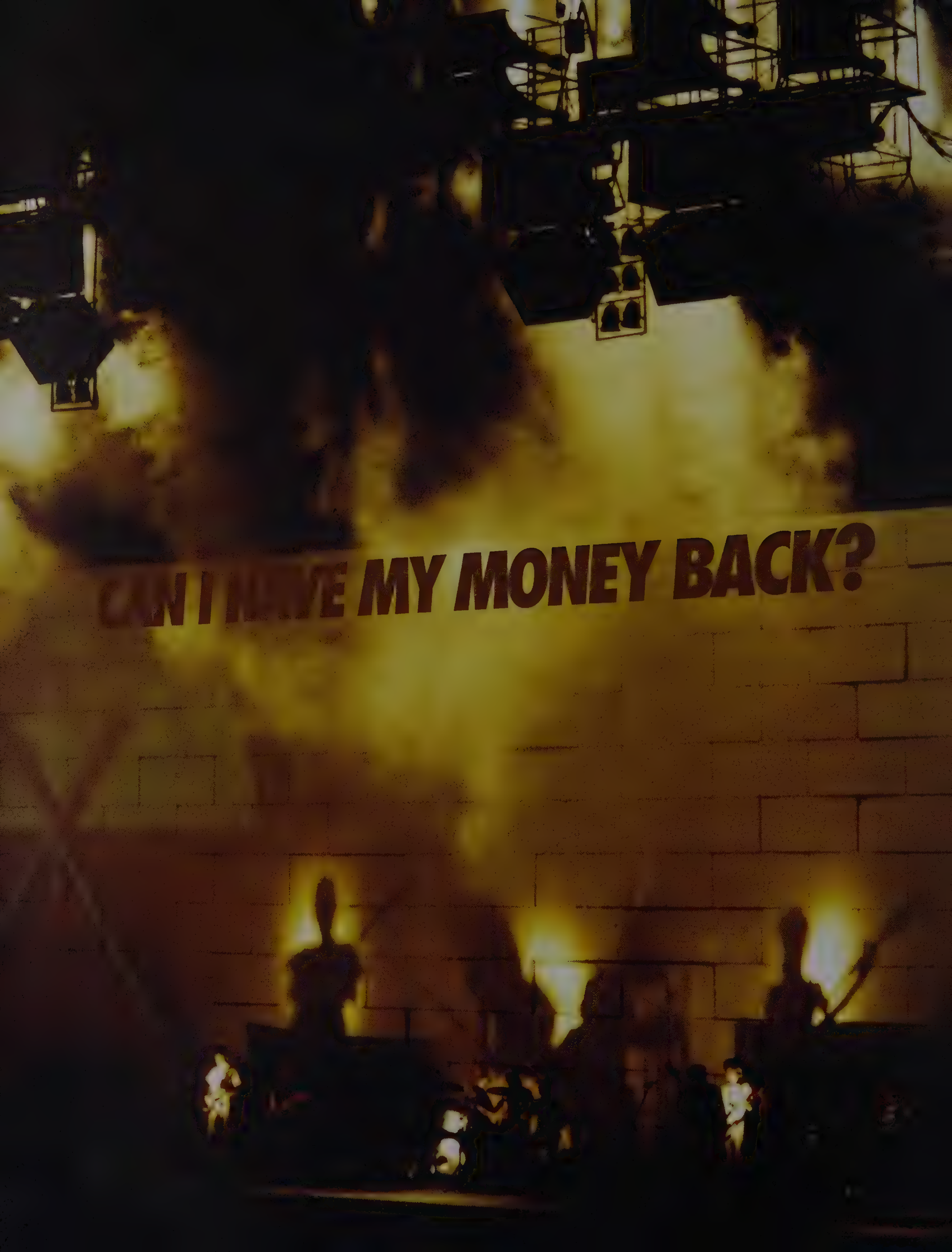

CAN I HAVE MY MONEY BACK?

# Pink Floyd's Post-Partum Parity

BY DAVE DIMARTINO • NOVEMBER 1984 • PHOTO BY PETER STILL

**6:30 PM (Apparently He Was Driving To Chicago)**
In a car, on the way to see Pink Floyd. Almost. It isn't Pink Floyd anymore. It's Roger Waters. He played bass and stuff. It's taking a long time.

**6:30 PM (Apparently He Was Talking To David Gilmour)**
*So what's the status of Pink Floyd*

"There just *isn't* really a status, you know? No one's made any decisions, no one's really decided to quit, completely, but we haven't made any plans to do anything. Rick's left, of course, but as far as the other three of us are concerned, we just haven't got any plans at the moment. And when and if that situation changes, we'll do something."

**6:30 PM (Apparently He Broke Down Over His Word Processor)**
Good lord, machine, you sit there while I pound these words out and you do not react. You do not react when I write about Pink Floyd because to you those words are not words but numbers that take up 10 character spaces on the viewscreen. You do not know that this band no longer has a status even though I just typed that. And if you wanted to know about Pink Floyd, I could pull out the appropriate discs but you could never fit them in your drive. So you will have to trust me.

**6:35 PM (Apparently He Was Still Driving)**
Saw David Gilmour a few weeks ago. Liked him. Like his new album, too. But it took a while. Had to hear Roger Waters's album, in fact. That was when I decided I liked Gilmour's. Driving to Chicago to see if Water's new album will be any better when I see it "performed" onstage. Huh?

**6:35 PM (Apparently He Took A Lot Of Drugs)**
There are vast, cosmic links within the Pink Floyd framework. One I saw them in Detroit, doing *Dark Side Of The Moon*. Towards the end, it got psychedelic. The mixture of lights, smoke and the crowd provided an odd hallucination: I thought I saw a covered wagon—on its side, with one of its wheels spinning—floating in the middle of Cobo Arena. Said I: "Wow!"

Years later, Pink Floyd performed *The Wall* in New York. I was there. An animated sequence by Gerald Scarfe was projected on the actual "wall" itself, and suddenly Scarfe zoomed in on a tricycle, laying on its side, with one of its wheels spinning wildly. Said I: "Wow!"

And now I look at the cover of David Gilmour's album, *About Face*. He's got his thumb out. And Roger Waters's new album is called *The Pros And Cons Of Hitch Hiking*. And it's got a naked girl on the cover. Sure wish she'd turn around so we could see what she looks like, don't you? And hey—David Gilmour's new album is called *About Face*, so maybe *he* wants to see her, too! And . . . both records are on the *same record label!* Say I: "Wow!"

What goes up, must come down—and isn't it too cosmic!

**6:40 PM (Apparently He Was Asking Gilmour Personal Questions)**
*Did Pink Floyd reach the point where you were so big there was no need to talk to one another unless it was time to record??*

"It's not much to do with being *big*—we've never really been close personal friends. *They* started a group together, because they wanted to be in a group together—and it was before my time—*not* because they were real close friends. And when you start that sort of thing up, you get the people who can do the best possible job at that moment, because you have ambitions. You don't have friends in who can't play for no reason. I mean, some people do, but I don't think the Floyd was ever started off that way. And we are, really, about as friendly as we've ever been."

*You're saying you've never fought*

"We fight *all the time!* I mean, myself and Roger have huge arguments, and we've practically come to *blows* sometimes, because we disagree about what we're doing and we both *believe* in what we're doing. To the extent where if I think he's doing something wrong and I'm trying to dissuade him from doing it—or vice-versa—then it can become fairly heated, because we want it to be right. And the great thing about being in a band like that is that some of the great things that happen happen *because* of compromise, because one person wants it one way, the other wants it another, and you reach some sort of compromise.

"And sometimes some things *don't* work because of compromise."

**6:40 PM (Apparently Morons Are Digging Up I-94)**
Slow going to Chicago. Odd how Pink Floyd have petered out. They say they haven't, but they have. Egos. Hard to figure who would really cares at this point. I'll stick on the tape of the Roger Waters album. That ought to cheer me up.

**6:40 PM (Apparently The Word Processor Barked)**
Eat type, machine! Could you care that a band that once probed the deepest of psychic truths has now splintered into two disparate factions? Do you fully comprehend the ramifications of the Cosmic Battle Of The Bands? Have you ever heard Black Bolt scream? Do you resent me for wasting your memory on this crap?

**6:45 PM (Apparently David Gilmour Figured "What The Heck")**
*If your album does better than Roger's—and I think it will—do you think you will have proved a point you couldn't prove in Pink Floyd??*

"Of course. To a certain extent there's an air of competition between us. Roger does think—and has said—that he *is* the Pink Floyd. That he is the reason for what Pink Floyd is."

*He's said that??*

"He has said that to people."

*What do you say to that??*

"I just say that he's *not*, you know? I mean that is a basic bone of contention, obviously. We all have our—every person has their own 'shortsightedness,' or myopia in life. I have my shortsightedness and Roger has his. My shortsightedness may be that I think I'm a vital, essential ingredient to what the Pink Floyd has done all the way through. And Roger’s myopia to me seems to be that he thinks, at this juncture, that I’m not.

“I mean, he’s saying he *is* it—I’ve never thought or believed that I *am* it. I’m a vital *part* of it, that’s what I’ve always believed. And to me—and I don’t want to get this into a huge fight or argument between myself and Roger—the *Final Cut* album is really his own work. I don’t like it. I think it shouldn’t have been out like that as a Pink Floyd record. But that’s one of those things that we fight about and argue about and disagree on and cause a bit of bad feeling at the time. But we get over these things.

“Obviously, I would like my album to do well. I’d like it to do better than Roger’s. I don’t know whether it will, and it doesn’t really matter terribly much. But I think I have something that is musical, and valuable, and *is* a vital part of it.”

### 6:45 PM (Apparently Roger Waters Was Performing In A Very Large Barn)

My kind of town. My kind of aircraft hangar. My kind of seats—so intimate you can’t help being thrilled when the first three members of the audience you see, each weighing in at over 300 lbs. apiece, check their ticket stubs and then look over at you. There aren’t even any arms on the seats. What the *heck* is that stuff on the stage? Stay away, tubs!

### 6:45 PM (Apparently He Attempted Putting Things In Perspective)

So on one hand you’ve got David Gilmour with a new solo album and Roger Waters with *his* new solo album, and each one is touring America. David Gilmour’s got Mick Ralphs playing guitar; Roger Waters has Eric Clapton. David Gilmour is talking to the press; Rogers is being “selective.” David Gilmour’s new album is filled with nice melodies, fine guitar playing, and surprisingly astute lyrics; Roger Waters’s new album is just, um, filled.

### 6:50 PM (Apparently He Would Wear No Funny Hats)

*Five years ago, if someone plopped your album and Roger’s on the turntable and asked me to guess which one was Pink Floyd’s, it wouldn’t have been his.?*

“Well, you know, it’s one of those things where in this point of our lives, I suppose, we’ve both got a little something to prove. I’m sort of not happy about the way Pink Floyd has gone after *The Wall*. . . ”

*What do you mean??*

“Well, I don’t like the *Final Cut* album—I don’t like the way we got into it, and I just don’t think it’s a good enough album. I quite simply think there are three good tracks on it and the rest of it is not good enough. It’s substandard to me.”

### 6:50 PM (Apparently The Word Processor Sobbed)

You will have to take my word for it, machine, that David Gilmour is entirely correct. *The Final Cut* was substandard. Shall we talk about Roger Waters?

### 6:50 PM (Apparently The Show Was To Begin)

That zany Roger! The curtain behind the stage looks like a living room. He can’t stay away from those special effects.

Gimme a program. Wow, nice. Bet *these* rake in the bucks in five years. Check out these tunes listed: first half of the set is old Pink Floyd stuff, second half is *The Pros And Cons Of Hitch Hiking*.

Hmm.

### 6:55 PM (Apparently Other People Are)

Roger Waters's first song of the night: “Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun.” You can find the live version on Ummagumma. If you look.

### 7:00 PM (Apparently They Would Sit Around Completely Satisfied)

I've always thought that of all the Pink Floyd members, you were the one who'd rather be producing and being more prolific than you've been. Did it bother you to sit around waiting to produce one album every three years or so?

“I get moments of frustration about the time we've taken to do things, but no-I'm entirely happy with the general progress of what we've done. I mean, when *Dark Side Of The Moon* came out, I was 27, I suppose. Roger was 30, we were all married, we all had families on the way, all that sort of stuff.

“And we didn't want to be doing it the way you do it when you're 18 or 20, touring around the world. We wanted to be able to take a little bit more time doing things, we wanted to get things right when we did them, and we wanted to be able to take some time off and have holidays. You can't do that sort of stuff when you're just starting out-you have to slog until you're completely established and safe. You can't afford to take a minute off, really, you've got to just keep at it. And as soon as we felt we could take life a little easier, we wanted to do so.

“I mean, music isn't everything in life. There's a lot of other stuff to it. I have never thought music was everything—I see a lot of young kids say music is everything in their life, and I've just never been like that. There's always been other things in my life. It's a part of my life-and a vital and important part of my life that I love and couldn't do without-but it's a part.”

### 7:00 PM (Apparently He Was Supposed To Be Having The Time Of His Life)

OK. Roger Waters runs through his hits, the bulk of them from *Wish You Were Here* onward. Neat to see Eric Clapton jamming down with the Floydian sound-but not the real thing.

Question: Waters and Gilmour both do “Money” in their stage shows. Which one's better? Answer: Who cares? Bring on the new stuff.

### 7:00 PM (Apparently Sex And Violence Were All He Could Now Relate To)

You could not know, word processor, that what was once grand psychedelia has now become a nut-house circus of sex, blood and death, the bulk of which is emanating from Roger Waters, who never needs to write another song again in his life to live the comfortable life of a millionaire. Shall we give him our thanks, therefore, that he feels the need to provide a multi-screen stage show that offers us rape, murder by chainsaw, terrorism, sexual humiliation, vomit, drug abuse, alcoholism, depression, and a “happy” ending? Shall we look out at the eager audience and wonder how much of the spectacle is on the stage and how much of it is lying in the back of Roger Waters's mind, waiting for his next gala production? Shall we wonder why the 300-lb. boy in front of me is standing on his chair and cheering when masked terrorists break into the house on the screens onstage and rev up their chainsaws?

Maybe he wanted some peanuts or something.

### 7:05 PM (Apparently The Show Must Go On)

Personally, I think you have a much more highly-evolved melodic sense than Roger does . . .

“Me too.”

. . . and I like your lyrics very much. But it seems to me that the combination of the two of you together offers more than either of your own albums does. . .

“I couldn’t agree more. I couldn’t agree more.”

Do you envision him agreeing, as well?

“I don’t have expectations. I'm not going to sit around and wait for him to call. And if I get to the point where that's the next thing I want to do, then I'll give him a call. I don't know.”

### 7:06 PM (Apparently The Circus Was Over)

Last tune of the night in Chicago: ‘Brain Damage.’

### 7:06:30 PM (Apparently The Machine Demanded A Sacrifice)

So you're fully confident, then?

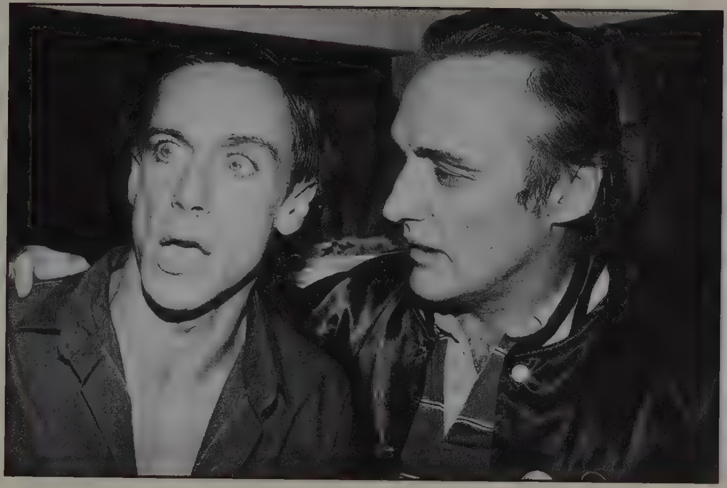
“I think for the first time, last year, when I started to write, I started to actually believe that I could write a lyric. And I'm still very slow, and I'm quite hard on myself. I think I have to be. And I discard an enormous amount of stuff. I mean, each song that I wrote had like 30 or 40 full scrap sheets of paper I threw away.

“I mean, I think I’ll get a word processor next time.” ■

# BACKSTAGE

## WHERE THE STARS TANK UP & LET THEIR IMAGES DOWN

Nicolas Cage loved visiting the CREEM offices.

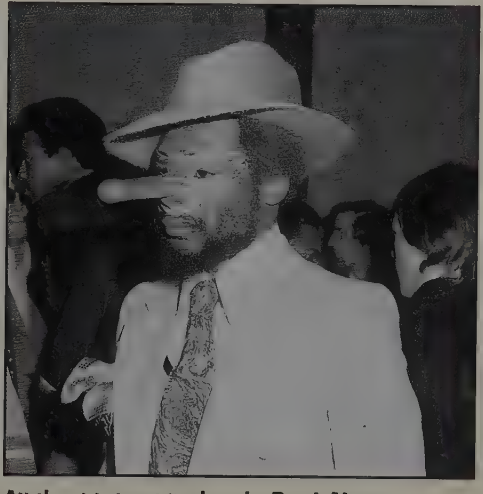

Jimmy should've known Frank Booth would touch something else.

"I'll just take a peek and see if he's still there."

"A priest, a clown and a cowboy walked into a bar with Graham Parker . . ."

"For the last time, lady, my name's not Johnny Cougar! SECURITY!"

Heart always like to get their palms greased.


All the girls loved it when the Black Meanie showed up.

ALL PHOTOS CREEM PHOTO ARCHIVE

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CITY HALL

# Star's Cars

## SPARKS

February 1976
Photo by Barry Levine

Never in the history of the automotive industry has there been a group like Sparks, glimpsed here in their passion-purple Model T which the thrifty group used exclusively on their recent whirlwind tour of Nome, Alaska. Sparks are also what fly in flurries from the tailpipe of this jalopy when these gazoopas come rolling up to the arenas where they ply their whizz. Causalities so far: One afro-frizzed groupie who made the mistake of chasing the T under the delusion that they were the Little Rascals on a comeback tour ("Alfalfa's always been my dream hunk," she gasped from her hospital bed). She was lucky' all she lost was her friz (bald now), her lashes, the hairs inside her nostrils, and stray strands of bellybutton lint. Worse luck befell three police officers disguised as hookers who solicited the boys in the band and ended up in the Sparksmobile, the mistake of their lives since Russ Mael was so surprised to get a handful of tuber rooting instead of the concave version that he pulled the whole thing out by the roots and beat the other two flatfeet to death with the bloody billy. So remember, hitchhikers: a ride with Sparks is a suicide sally!

# CREEM

*Once upon a time, there was a time when we didn't suffer from the dumbing down of everything. We hadn't been MTV'ed, American Idol'ed, A&R'ed, MySpace'ed, YouTube'ed, Starbuck'ed, or GAP'ed. We couldn't read what the online community was thinking; we actually had to have our own opinion based on our own opinion.*

*Alas, where did it all go so wrong?*

*Once upon a time, there was a time when music and its biz hadn't been industrialized beyond recognition. And CREEM Magazine reflected in words and pictures that Old World, hand-crafted, artisanal spirit of another era. Say good-bye to then.*

*—Russell Mael, Sparks*

# David Lee Roth

## AND THE GLEEBY SHALL ROCK

BY BILLY ALTMAN • APRIL 1985 • PHOTO BY MOSHE BRAKHA

NO
STOPPING
ANY TIME

*It's the Saturday after New Year's, and if David Lee Roth, bouncing around his midtown Manhattan hotel room, seems to be feeling as if the holiday season festivities haven't yet ended, well, that's perfectly understandable. It's been, after all, a pretty above-average week for Diamond Dave, even by official Party Animal standards. Not only did Roth help ring out the old year—you know, the one named after his band's last album—as a celebrity emcee on MTV's New Year's Eve lollapalooza, showing up for the event escorted by his new "bodyguards"—two bikini-clad female bodybuilders—and loudly proclaiming his lone New Year's resolution ("This year, everybody has to decide if they're going to be a great big hot dog or a tiny little wiener; I myself am going to be a little weiner"). Not only did he ring in the new year the very next night as David Letterman's very first guest for 1985 as part of a bill featuring none other than Dr. Ruth Westheimer ("You know what they say," Roth later reflected, "Whenever you have a member of Van Halen on the television, you'd better have a sex therapist within the immediate vicinity"). No, what made this week different than all other weeks was that it marked the appearance on planet Earth of David Lee Roth's first-ever solo record, a four-track EP of cover songs originally done by the likes of the Beach Boys (!), the Lovin' Spoonful (!!), and Louis Prima (!!!), an EP that is just so alien to what one might expect from heavy metals' Mr. Splits that it makes, well, almost perfect sense. Especially when David Lee, er, explains it.*

*"What is this little record all about?" Dave asks before I even get to pose the question. "Why now?" he laughs. "Well, Billy," he begins to answer in an overly formal newsreel announcer's voice, "In a continuing quest for the ultimate cool move, Van Halen's David Lee Roth today shocked the music world . . . Really now, let's consider the facts, such as they are. Let's pretend you and I were managers. Here we have a rock star. He's just got done selling eight million records. It's been his band's biggest year. His band's best year. They're writing better, they're playing better, they're more popular than ever. Posters of Dave in the bathtub, Dave on a boat, Dave in chains, it doesn't matter—Dave anywhere, it's worth five bucks.*

*"So all of a sudden our protegé turns around and says, 'Hey, I want to release the song 'California Girls'—in the middle of winter. I want to put Louis Prima's 'Just A Gigolo' on a record.' So, in terms of management or whatever, the answer is no, this doesn't make sense at all. But in terms of Diamond Dave, it makes all the sense in the world. I think people have come to expect the band and myself to accomplish the impossible, because, quiet often, we alone attempt the absurd. So I think it's a perfect time for me to do this. I mean,*

it feels right. You know, use my hand darling, I won't look. Yeah, we're surfin' it, sure. But I think Van Halen does not live by hits alone—er, make that *hit* alone. So we are afforded the opportunity of doing things like this.

"Y'know, I've got a job. People ask me, 'Dave, do you work?' I say, 'Yeah, sure I work.' Like they've got this thing, Rock in Rio, y'know? I could easily jump on the plane tomorrow—y'know, 'Hey, let's get some Hawaiian Tropic, we'll stop the limo if we need some beer, where's that plane?' So we get down there and we look around. I know the guys in Eddie Money's band, I ask 'em if I can borrow their amps. I brought my shoes; I'm cool. So we play down their, spend about two weeks, have a good time. We get a hellified suntan, gamble away all our money, and then come home. They say, 'Dave, you got a job?' I say, 'Yeah, I just got back from a *big* job!' Really, I don't need to make anything beyond the suntan. As long as it's paid for, that's enough. The rest is gravy.

"So I just had some time off, and my job is that I sing and dance for a living, so I just sang you four tunes. Now maybe you want to know why I didn't make a whole album. Hwy an EP? Well, you figure any 10 albums you want to name, right off the bat you'd say that, at the most, all of 'em only have three or four songs on 'em. Well, this way, all I did was trim away all the fat and filler. AND I'LL SELL IT TO YOU FOR LESS! I'M ON *YOUR* SIDE!"

"You mean like, 'Hi, I'm Dave—trust me!?'" I ask, finally managing to get a word in edgewise. "I mean, obviously this record has songs on it that you really like, right? . . ."

. . . I mention that the record's A-side, with "Easy Street" and "Just A Gigolo" has a very East Coast, a very *urban* feel to it and that I'm curious as to how much of this was conscious on Roth's part. "A lot," he answers. "We worked at the Power Station, and I walked to and from the studio every session, so I could purposely soak up some of the anxiety and tension of the streets here. I spend most of my time walking, as kitsch as that may be. And going into this record, I wanted to try and put myself in the hotbed of urban-blast-taxi-meltdown-madness and soak it up and take it to the studio and release it through a microphone. And that's what I did. You'll have to tell me if mission accomplished.

"New York energy is very different from any energy anywhere else," Roth continues. "Totally and completely different from Los Angeles energy. L.A. energy is probably the soul of Van Halen. And that's lotsa stuff—not just a blonde and a board." Pause. "Though a lot of it is." Longer pause. "Well, alright, maybe *all* of it is. All I know is you get real distinct feeling from each of these songs. I mean, now that I look in the rear view mirror—and I really didn't plan it this way—but I think that if you listen to these songs you hear some very specific sides of me."

"You mean like the Many Moods of David Lee Roth?" I say. "Not moods, really," says Dave. "More just places. You can line me up in places better than you can moods. I could be in any one place and have 12 different moods; it all depends on who's buying the drinks and what the lighting's like. But it *is* places here. 'Easy Street' is indoors and it's very smoky and very hot, and if somebody's taking their clothes off, it's probably on a stage, and all the upholstery is red—'You know how many naugas died to make this couch, kid? Put your cigarette out in the tray'—that kinda place. 'Gigolo' is definitely outdoors and in the city. I see streetlights, and I see a confrontation, I see the steam coming out of a manhole cover, I see an argument with a taxi driver, I see a proposition . . . 'California Girls' is on the beach, in the sun, in the water, in sexy bathing suits, it's got a board under one arm and a babe under the other. And 'Coconut Grove' is where we go when we get back, where we go to pour the sand out of our shoes after it's all over."

Roth says that the rest of Van Halen has been very supportive. "Hey," he says, "I tried to get Van Halen to do 'Gigolo' for *1984*, but we had too much original stuff. I mean, we're *expressing* ourselves now, man! But they've been great about this thing. I haven't approached Van Halen music here at all and that was quite conscious. Look, if I was going to do something close to Van Halen, I *know* where to go to find the best people for it. In my own band. So why would I then want to work with other people and have to learn all of their habits and put up with them? So I wanted to do something very different."

Does he think that, let's say, the average Van Halen fan will like this record? "I always say you don't need rock 'n' roll to rock," laughs Dave. "And this stuff *is* high-end music, man. I'd say that the average Van Halen fan'll give it a 10 'cause you can dance to it and it's got soul. I mean, I haven't sacrificed anything here. Everything that I do is in *addition* to, not *instead* of. I haven't replaced anything! With me, you've always got carte blache. You know that scene in the Marx Brothers movie with Groucho in his cabin on the boat and everyone's coming in? Well," he says spreading his arms out wide, "*same thing here!*"

Somehow, mentioning the Marx Brothers leads us into a discussion of Van Halen's humor, especially as it's been able to show through on the band's videos. "What can I say?" mugs Roth. "We're rich enough to do it now. You reach that point where you're obviously secure in what you're doing and you just sail forth. I mean, now that we're *major movie moguls*, the company guy from Warners just shows up and gives us the money. He hands it to me on the sly and says, 'Dave, good work on "Teacher." I won't even *ask* you about the next concept.' And that's it. Look, success writes its own ticke; around here. Nothing amazing about it. The lead singer from Ratt says, 'Hey, gimme a hundred thou,I got this idea for three minute's worth of film.' And he gets it. Ha Ha Ha. Have your machine call my machine. Somethin', ain't it?"

"Wait, there you go again," I say. "Trashin' other bands just like the old days."

"You know I always like to play professional wrestling with other groups," laughs Roth. "Tag team music. That's what I want. Like Louis Prima called it, Gleeby Music. Like this wrestling/rock 'n' roll connection. It's great. In both, you've got colorful heroes. Rock 'n' roll's always been the most sexy, the most hyper, the most energetic music, and wrestling's just like that in terms of sports. I mean, they live *one channel away from each other!* So, if you're looking for prime-time-knock-down-drag-out-make-it-worth-my-money excitement, is it Ric Ocasek . . . or Hulk Hogan? Is it Boy George, or Brutus Beefcake?

"I like exaggerated, larger than life stuff—and you get to believe it, 'cause they *interview* the wrestlers! And they wouldn't lie in an *interview!* I mean, the papers don't lie, do they, Billy? Look, once you've written this down and it's printed, *everything* I say becomes truth. And the interviews are much cooler than the matches. And that's how I feel about rock 'n' roll a lot of the time, too," Roth confesses. "I much prefer the locker room stuff to the actual concert. Let's say you gotta review us. What're you gonna say? 'Dave jumped, Edward's guitar solo was cool, the lighting was good, the crowd got off! But what we really wanna know is, is that you or are you really happy to see us, Dave?'

"That's what I live for," says Roth. "That *that* will exist. Even if *we* have to throw the party."

I tell Dave that I'm curious about the little slogans and bromides that he often sprinkles into his conversations—things like 'Success is never final and failure is never fatal' and 'I don't get all the women I want; I get all the women who want me.' "Well," he responds, "These are all rationalizations, and I guess I use them to get me through. I think rationalizations are more important than sex," he deadpans. "Think about it: When was the last time you went three days without making a rationalization? I use them as sort of levers to get me up the stairs. It's not *all* just bar talk, you know. People say, 'Dave, you're always tossing off these lines, have these pat answers for everything, all these humorous sayings . . .' and I say, 'Yeah, I got a sense of humor, it's one of the best things about me. I got a sense of humor as big as the ocean, so things might come out funny a lot of the time. But before you point a finger at me, why don't you take this stuff home, write it down, and *read* it? I *think* there's a little more in there. I mean, I'm not like one of my attorneys . . ."

Remind me to read this when finished. ■

# CREEM

# Judas Priest Leathered, Studded Dudes Or . . .

BY SYLVIE SIMMONS • SEPTEMBER 1986
PHOTO BY TOM REUSCHE

COWS ARE VERY useful except in India. There are varying degrees of cow-use–milk, cheese, burgers, cheeseburgers–but none so useful as the concealment and adornment of the puny human form with the bag the cow comes wrapped in. Shiny, tough, black, reflective, clinging, erotic *leather*. The stuff of Brando, Vicious, Faithfull, German bomber-pilots and *Heavy Metal*. There are varying degrees of metal, but none so abbatoired and leathered and heavy as Judas Priest.

But heck, *you* know them. No need to introduce them. On with this interview business.

"Rob," I ask–this being Rob Halford, frontman, High Priest of Cow-use and Supreme Screamer. "Are you a gay right-wing biker into S&M?"

"Well," chuckle the well-modulated Midland tones. "Well–that's pretty much the way Judas Priest has *looked* for a number of years, isn't it?"

Like anorexic bullocks romping through Nazi department store kitchenware sections, like bath-house Hell's Angels, like–

"In actual fact we are changing the image somewhat on this world tour. We've decided," says Rob, "to drop all the studs and the chains and the whips and the S&M things."

But Priest without studs and stuff is like whiskey without alcohol; what "new image" are they going to go for?

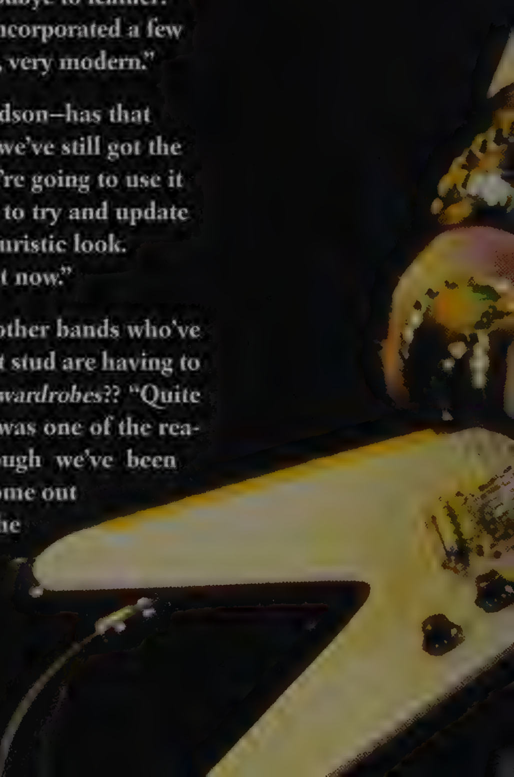
"Please don't get the impression we're going to come out looking like Motley Crue," is the tentative preface. High-heels and hairspray, I choke?

"No, not all the make-up and the hairdos. What we've done is take the strong parts of our image–the leather and the tough, aggressive look–and we've tried to make it a bit more *stylish*, if that's the right word. The way this album was developing, we went to our costume designer in L.A. and said: 'Look, Ray, we feel it's time for a change. We don't want you to give us a *wimpy* image by any means, but can you take the essential ingredients of what we're about–the power and the strength–and incorporate this into a new look?' So he went away and thought about it for months and months, and we put together a whole new bunch of outfits. It's difficult to describe them actually, but I think it's a step in the right direction. The sound, the album cover and the look of the band is now very *1986*."

But there's still some leather–not all *black* and a little bit tarted up, but leather for all that. "God forbid we should ever say goodbye to leather!" Rob is shocked: "We've just incorporated a few more colors. The style is very, very modern."

What about the Harley Davidson–has that been put out to grass?? "No, we've still got the Harley. I don't know how we're going to use it onstage–we're going to have to try and update it somewhat too, give it a futuristic look. They're working on that right now."

And Malice and all these other bands who've copied Priest down to the last stud are having to work on buying *whole new wardrobes*?? "Quite honestly," Rob laughs, "that was one of the reasons for the change. Although we've been flattered by people who've come out and adopted something of the



Judas Priest look, we felt we wanted to step forward and redefine what we think Heavy Metal looks like in the '80s, and I think we accomplished that.

"There have been a lot of bands looking and sounding similar to Priest and I'm noticing it more and more. In America there are bands with Priest songs names," says Rob, "bands called Tyrant and Grinder and Steeler and Running Wild. Nice and flattering as that may be, I tell any new band who asks me that *originality* is important. That's what put us where we are–being one of the first at what we were doing.

Diplomatic man is Rob. Unlike guitarist K.K. Downing who used to moan that he had to look twice at Iron Maiden to make sure Dave Murray wasn't really *him*. And a hard man to get a straight answer from; he writhed out of the gay biker business pretty well. So let's break it down to: does he wear leather and ride a motorcycle offstage and hang around in dubious bars?

"Well, I do ride my motorbike. I've got a great '78 Harley at my home in Phoenix, Arizona, and most of the time I'm cruising around on that. So quite honestly there's not a great deal of difference in how I am offstage. You'll still find me in all the bars over there–the *rock 'n' roll* bars! I don't go around with a bodyguard, I don't ponce around like certain rock stars do at all the 'in' places.

"I think that's basically down to the fact that our background's working-class and normal. I'm not giving you that 'Oh, we're from a working-class background' routine, but essentially that's the kind of people we are. We haven't changed, really. We do pretty much in our free time now as we used to do all those years ago when we were struggling to make a living out of it. You'll still find us having a drink and checking out bands and talking about music, and not much else.

"To this day I don't really have anything in the form of *hobbies*. I don't play golf!" he laughs, even though he lives just down the road from the aging rocker who's given a whole new meaning to *iron man*, Alice Cooper. "And I don't play tennis–I'm a pretty inactive sort of person in that respect.

"All I ever wanted to do was be in a rock 'n' roll band and live that lifestyle. Admittedly these days it's nice to have money in the bank, but I think *everyone's* striving for that, no matter what their walk of life. Everyone wants to better themselves.

"I think," thinks Rob, "that's why there are so many good bands from Birmingham, why heavy metal came from the Midlands. If you live in a council house (housing project) on a really bleak estate–where I'm from–and you look out of the window every morning, you think 'God, there must be something better than this!' And you just take whatever God-given talents and abilities you've got and you use them to get out.

"Fortunately for me I could sing and write songs. It took a while, but I'm glad to say I made it."

It's taken me a long time, but you're glad to see we've made it to talking about the new album. It's called *Turbo*, and all of you with taste have already bought it, stolen it or taped it off the radio. Written in Spain, recorded In the Caribbean and remixed in LA.–a Holy Trinity of hot places–it's magnificent. Ah, when you only think of all the plastic out there that's been used to make spatulas or frisbees or artifical limbs that could have far better been used making albums like this one! There's some, great tunes, even some great *singing*. Has the screaming gone the way of the whips-and-blackleather?

"It's been my first real opportunity, given our type of songs, to sound a little bit less *hysterical*," says Rob. "Not just yelling at the top of my voice. With songs like 'Private Property' or 'Out In The Cold,' stuff like that, I've been able to expand a little bit in my style . . ."

. . . Rob likes America. It helps, what with living there. "The best thing I like about living where I live is the weather. Where else can you go for a swim on Christmas Day while your turkey's in the oven?" Answer that one if you can! "The worst thing about America is the conservatism, the restrictions on TV and radio, which are very severe. Apart from that it's a great place to-live, especially for a musician, because there's so much musical activity going on."

Still, he stands by his statement that there's no such thing as a true *American* heavy metal band.

"I'm sure that all the Motley Crues and Ratts and everybody else believe in what they're doing and are where they want to be. But to me, the true definition of heavy metal comes from England. There are some good imitators elsewhere, but there's no way they can sound like a heavy metal band! The whole approach to the instruments is a lot more aggressive and a lot more powerful.

"I'm not saying that the actual background of someone who comes from a steel town in Pittsburgh is any easier than someone who comes from Birmingham or Sheffield, but it's the difference between being an Englishman and an American, between playing tough real metal and playing a million notes a minute..."

What's the biggest misconception about Priest these days?? "I would say it's still that we're not very intelligent people–something that's directed at the whole heavy metal world–and that we spend all our time going around doing the rape-and-pillage scene, getting smashed, drunk every night and taking drugs, and going home and burning the black candles. Which is a complete load of rubbish!

"We're all musicians in our middle and late 30s, and surviving as well as we have done, I think there's a clear indication that we're five very mature, level-headed, professional musicians with–dare I say it?–considerable talent, who enjoy what we're doing and hope to share that enjoyment with as many people as possible.

"It's unfortunate that *'Judas Priest'* as a name creates a certain image immediately, like the name *'Black Sabbath'* does, without people getting a chance to listen to the music. But I think that we've got that name in the musical history books already, so I'm proud to go out under it. I expect we'll have the Bible-thumpers picketing this tour as always, though. It's getting worse instead of better in America." An issue they address directly in the new song 'Parental Guidance'.

"We were targeted when the PMRC launched their campaign as being one of the so-called culprits responsible for undermining the Youth of America with a song called 'Eat Me Alive'." A ditty about having oral sex at gunpoint. Even *I* shuddered at that one, I tell Rob, who laughs that laugh again.

"I'm not going to go off into a tirade of self-defense here, but suffice to say I wrote that song one night when I was smashed out of my mind in Ibiza, where we recorded that album. I was given the rough idea of the music from Ken (K.K) and Glenn and I got drunk and went off in a tirade of verse after verse.

"It was one of those cases of waking up next morning with a hangover and saying, 'My God, did I write *that*?!' If you'd have seen *some* of the verses you would have died! We censored *them* ourselves! We did it very tongue-in-cheek, a real spoof, a total send-up. Of course, people take it too seriously."

And they've moved on from that sort of stuff, he says, same as they've moved on from "the doom and gloom stuff" of yesteryear. He's talking about "expanding" the stalwart Priest audience, and there's even talk of individual solo albums somewhere in the future. Behind all those leather and studs-sorry, scratch the studs-does there lurk a secret crooner dying to burst out? "Well, I'm looking forward to that part of my career when people will hear that I can do a little bit more than just yell at the top of my voice!"

And he's probably looking even more forward to a final question. Like this one. As he knows he's already made the rock history books, what would he like them to say about Judas Priest?" You can't ask for more than to be remembered as one of the greatest British heavy metal bands of all time." ■

CR em

# Drinking (And Drinking Lots More!) with THE REPLACEMENTS

BY BILL HOLDSHIP • SEPTEMBER 1986 • PHOTOS BY GREG ALLEN

**SO "WHO'S HOT?"**

If you believe the image of Michael J. Fox standing behind a crystal ball on the cover of *Rolling Stone*, the Replacements are one of "The New Stars In Your Future"—and that almost makes 'em *legitimate* and *respectable*. But *Rolling Stone* was hardly the first to sing the praises of the Replacements. There's been a big critical buzz ever since the band cut their first hardcore-meets-roots-rock records for (their hometown) Minneapolis's Twin/Tone label five years ago. Critics placed the band at the forefront of their "American Rock Renaissance" hype, and voted two of the band's LPs number four and number two respectively in the 1984 and '85 *Village Voice* national rock critics' poll. The *Voice* thought so much of the Replacements that it put the band's picture on its cover and had RJ Smith write a major feature on them before they even signed with Warner Brothers.

Almost every Replacements article makes them sound too "good" to ring true. In fact, like the Ramones before them, the Replacements would make a terrific cartoon show or comic strip—sorta like an '80s punk version of the *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* (even though Fat Freddie is probably upwardly mobile and buying designer drugs and cats in the '80s). They're street punks. They're amateurs who can't really play their instruments. They like to get drunk. They're stoopid and obnoxious. And some would call them "the greatest rock 'n' roll band in the world."

Yet if you've ever seen them live—opening for, say, X or sandwiched between R.E.M. and the Three O'Clock—you may wonder about this claim. The band *is* loud, obnoxious and occasionally funny onstage. They trade instruments right in the middle of a song, while other numbers reach total entropy. But it often sounds like they're *purposely* trying to sound bad. You may see flashes of brilliance in their covers of, say, "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" and "Black Diamond" (which you always hated by Kiss but they make sound *great*) or a familiar song from one of their latter LPs—but "greatest rock band in the world"? Nah. The joke is already getting old by the third time you see them.

And yet their last two LPs, *Let It Be* and *Tim*, were classic rock 'n' roll records, deserving to place as high as they did in the polls. The playing illustrates and induces excitement. Singer Paul Westerberg writes wonderful songs. And anyone who can write lyrics as poignant as those in "Bastards Of Young" or as humorous as those in "Answering Machine"—well, he's definitely not stoopid. Can it be that the Replacements are *trying* to be the punk band for those who missed "punk" the first time around? Could it be that they're a bit *contrived*?

On our way into the band's dressing room, J. Kordosh and I pass lead guitarist Bob Stinson in the hall. He looks like *a cartoon character* (really!), his eyes already like cherries in a vat of buttermilk at 6 p.m. We greet him, he grunts—and I realize he also looks like a character you'd be afraid to meet in a dark alley late at night. Inside, Westerberg offers Kordosh a beer, and bassist Tommy Stinson gives me his "special favorite"—100 proof vodka on ice. Let it be said at the onset that Westerberg impressed me as one of the most charming guys I've ever interviewed—honest, frank, funny and *definitely* not stoopid. Stinson is OK, too, and far from dumb. But being 19 years old, he seems to feel he has an "image" to uphold—and almost appears schizophrenic in how he reacts to us as the interview progresses. But what the hell—they give us lots to drink, and, before long we're having one helluva good time!

We discuss a lot of the typical things: heavy metal (PW: "Well, I can take it as a joke, but it seems the bands that do it don't see it as a joke. They take themselves seriously") and rock 'n' roll music in general. Their finances (PW: "We're making money, but we don't see it because you got like lawyers and accountants and fuckheads."). And life on a major label . . .

**PW:** They see it as there's a hundred bands like us who would die for our chance, who are starving hungry and would do whatever they're told. And they don't understand that we want to go as far as we can, but we don't want to be like A-Ha and shit. We're not like the Cult. We don't have a strong, hip image that's going to sell right now, and they don't know what to do with us.

**TS:** They think we're trying to piss them off, but we're just being ourselves. This isn't like a job. Or a big thing to make us popular and pick up chicks. We just like doing this—it's fun. They just sit there and go, "You guys are just trying piss us off. You want to be the bad kids of the rock business."

**They discuss their hard drinking image . . .**

**PW:** We drink heavily, not all the time, though.

**TS:** We're such outsiders to say this again, but we get onstage, all our amps are far behind us, and you got a crowd that's real far in front of you, and you feel weird because you're standing there in the middle of nowhere with a guitar in your hand. You don't know what to do with it. Still, to this day, and we've been like in the band for five or six years. And you can't get up there and be nervous.

**BH:** So do you get drunk before you play?

**PW:** No, we've never been drunk before we play. *Ever.*

**BH:** That's the image that's been painted.

**TS:** Sometimes it takes a drink to loosen up, to just be able to say "OK, this feels weird, but . . . "

**PW:** And if it's a small crowd, it helps sometimes because you see double—and then you can fill the joint.

**And songwriting . . .**

**BH:** So you just decided you could write songs and then did it?

**PW:** Sure. Honestly, I couldn't sing anyone's else's. I have a terrible voice. I have no range. We tried to do covers, and I could never do them. We do covers now, but we do them like Jerry Lee Lewis does them—we make them ours. We used to try to do shit note-for-note.

**TS:** It's been more of an honest thing since then.

**PW:** I mean, Christ, they tried to make me sing "Roundabout!"

**TS:** Except it was real fast.

**They talk about critics. . .**

**TS:** When I was a kid, most of the kids didn't even read magazines about bands . . .

**PW:** I did. See, that's where you're too young. He's 19, and I'm 26. I grew up like reading *Rolling Stone* and CREEM.

**BH:** Does it matter to you personally? Do you really care what the critics think?

**PW:** I'll be honest. It does. I'd like to lie and say it means nothing. Not that we think we're great or anything. We know exactly what we are. We get a giggle out of it, but it makes you feel good.

**TS:** When it's someone big and they say we're good, it makes you feel good—but I never really read any of that stuff about us. Unless someone's got something bad to say and it's funny or clever. I get a kick out of someone saying we suck because we're arrogant little pricks.

**PW:** You do until they single it out and say you look like a fucking fake rock star. You can take the general bullshit but . . .

**TS:** I can take it all.

**PW:** Yeah, until they say something . . . you know what I'm saying.

**TS:** I know what you're saying.

**And they discuss their amateurish "bad" shows and stoopid image . . .**

**JK:** I think you're giving us a little shuck and jive here. A band doesn't get signed to a major label without having some drive and ambition. And you guys are trying to project a total image of drunkeness . . .

**PW:** You saw through it. Would you like to manage us?

**BH:** Your shows seem contrived, like you're trying to be "bad."

**PW:** You saw us in some weird circumstances. When you open for a bigger band, you're sort of treated like baggage, and it's almost like "Well, you're damn lucky to be on this bill." And we don't like being told what to do. So in those events, we would rather blow a show completely to flip them the bird than play the game. We'll come out and give them a circus . . .

**TS:** And we could make the pussiest record ever, but we're still a loud, obnoxious rock band in a live environment. We couldn't play pussy live.

**BH:** Well, the other thing is that your songs are really fucking great.

**JK:** Are they just "great" or "fucking great"?

**BH:** Some are "fucking great" and some are just "great.

**PW:** You guys are fucking unbelievable. OK, go ahead.

**BH:** And it's like onstage, you try to act stupider than you really are.

**PW:** Uh, huh. There's a fear of not being able to reproduce something we did in the studio. In the studio, we can say this is good, and then we get up there and go, "Huh?" And if we can't make it that good, we don't want to look stupid trying to, because then we're just gonna come off like every other band. If we feel it's in our grasp, we'll go for it. But if we feel like this ain't gonna fly tonight, we'll take a more casual attitude toward it.

**TS:** We're afraid of looking too good.

**JK:** Do you guys have massive stage fright or what?

**PW:** Yeah. We're unprofessional. I'm still as scared as I ever was.

**TS:** And the hype and all the bullshit that goes along with it, that's scary.

**BH:** It puts pressure on you?

**TS:** We try to ignore it just so we won't get consumed by it.

**PW:** Lately, we've been trying to get a happy medium. We get a lot of people coming now to see us for the image and shit. And it's not something we contrive, it's what we are. But we'll try to play some of the songs good. It's like we won't try to purposely mess up. But there *are* some songs we'll just wing . . . And sometimes we're going for like a big kamikaze thing. I'd rather have them hating our guts in some circumstances, so they can at least go "Who the fuck was that band?"

**TS:** But the people are here to see *us* tonight. The fucking Replacements. The fucking Mats.

**JK:** Let's see how many "fucks" we can get in this sentence.

**TS:** You should have a couple more beers. You're starting to sound good. (To BH) How about you? Let's see you slur a few. C'mon fuckers, we can really talk now!

**They discuss "punk" rock . . .**

**PW:** We were heavily influenced by that. We weren't punks. We tried to be, but we realized that . . . It's the attitude. We're as rooted in that as the Beatles were in Chuck Berry. We can't shake it if we tried. I mean, we were punks. We weren't *punk rockers*, but we'll never be . . .

**TS:** We're assholes.

**PW:** . . . anything slick or show bizzy. And that's what punk rock was. It was amateurism, for yourself, for fun. That's what we were. And then we heard punk rock and said "Yeah, this is cool. This is easy."

**And we drink a lot more—and seem to make Tommy angry . . .**

**TS:** A musical instrument is like our drinking prop. No, no, no.

**PW:** "No, no, no"? That ain't gonna fly—"No, no, no." Too late now.

**TS:** We're gonna dig ourselves in, man. This bottle of 100 proof vodka is almost gone. What can we do? *(To JK)* You're wearing a polyester jacket . . .

**JK:** Well, you got a problem or what?

**TS:** No, I like it. I was just looking at your clothes. You can tell that this guy (BH), he's got a little extra money, he likes looking at his clothes and thinks he's all tough. But you just put on whatever's in your closet.

**BH:** Just in the last year, though. I used to dress just like you guys do.

**TS:** We think we're all fucking tough.
JK: You guys are some bad looking dudes!

**TS:** *(smashes bottle against the wall)*

**JK:** Aiieeeeee!

**BH:** You're not going to scare us. This guy once asked Blackie Lawless if he was a "homo."

**TS:** *(laughing, picks up recorder)* Ever see us break a fucking tape recorder?

**PW:** Ah, that's old hat.

**JK:** Why do you guys have such a self-deprecating attitude?

**TS:** Because we can't live down anything that's been said. We can't live down the fact that . . .

**PW:** We're assholes.

**TS:** We've tried to run from the articles about how drunk we were this night, and how lousy we were. It's just pointless to try to live that down, though. If I read about a bunch of drunks in a rock band that I hated, I wouldn't want to . . . oh, forget it. *(laughter)* I just realized that I better shut up for awhile. It's about that time.

**BH:** Nah.

**TS:** Yeah, you fuckers.

**BH:** We're not out to do a hatchet job on you guys.

**TS:** Ah, you fuckers don't know how many writers we've had say that to us. You guys are great guys, you remind me of Siskel & Ebert, but I still don't trust you worth a . . .

**BH:** Oh, c'mon!

**JK:** You slime! That's it, man!

**TS:** You can't trust writers, I swear to God! We had RJ Smith pal around with us for a week, and we thought he was our friend. Then he turns around and writes all the bad things about us and makes us look like a bunch of fuck-ups.

**JK:** We don't think you're fuck-ups.

**TS:** We *are* fuck-ups!

**JK:** Well, I bet I can drink as much as you guys. In fact, I know I can.

SUZAN CARSON

**TS:** Wanna try?

**PW:** No, let's not.

**BH:** Did you see that Dave Marsh recently did a hatchet job on you in *Rock & Roll Confidential*??

**PW:** I didn't have the pleasure, no.

**TS:** That's why I don't read . . .

**PW:** Dave Marsh sucks. He thinks the Who are the greatest band of all time.

**BH:** *(Begins reading the* RRC *item in which Marsh takes Westerberg to task for saying he likes Reagan for "looking good.")*

**PW:** Mmmm, hmmmm. I read that. It proves the point that rock 'n' roll has nothing to do with politics. Bands that try to . . . I mean, fuck them. It's like rock 'n' roll has nothing to do with the President or someone starving in China. In my opinion. Dave Marsh can blow it out of his ass.

**JK:** Well, see, what we've got here is a writer who actually wants something from you. He wants you to be what he wants you to be.

**TS:** Well, what are you going to write? If you hadn't talked to us . . .

**PW:** These fuckers don't care. Don't you know that yet?

**JK:** I don't care. I got three kids to take care of. You guys actually look like you don't give a damn.

**At this point in the interview, Tommy abruptly leaves the room, without a word to any of us.**

**BH:** Are we making him mad?

**PW:** No. He's probably going to look for a girl. It's been half an hour.

**Paul introduces us to drummer Chris Mars, a mild and quiet type of guy. When he exits, we discuss an assortment of topics, including whether or not Paul considers himself a splendid lyricist ("I try not to think about it 'cause it's like thinking about how you look in the mirror. If you don't like it, you can't change it") and mutual favorite movies. *Old Yeller* is passionately being discussed when Tommy reenters the room.**

**TS:** Fuck. Shit. Ass. Hell. Fuck. Hole. Shit.

**PW:** You're back?

**TS:** I'm back. I'm not saying a fucking word. I think we're fucking god-like.

**JK:** I think you can be described as Dionysian.

**TS:** How would you describe our band? And then we'll tell you how screwed you are.

**PW:** I think they've already got the title of "asshole."

**TS:** If you guys are the kind of guys you claim to be, then you'll write a good article. You can tell what we're like. I'm just skeptical of any writer.

**JK:** Look, Bill's gonna write it, and he's not a mean writer. I'd be more inclined to do a hatchet job. Not on you guys, though, because you've given me so many beers without bitching about it.

**TS:** We'll give any writer an extra beer if he says the truth.

**JK:** Well, it's hard to know what the truth really *is* here, you know?

**TS:** We told you the truth.

**JK:** OK, then we'll print it.

**BH:** Well, that thing RJ wrote in the *Voice* . . .

**TS:** It wasn't altogether bad. There were things he said that he didn't need to say, things that made us look bad . . .

**PW:** I wasn't upset because I understood he had to use the angle he took to get the story printed. He wrote the bad stuff. But he took the sympathetic angle, and I can see that.

**TS:** But see, it's people like that who create a bad image for us that we have to try to live down. Or just say "fuck it" and don't even try to live it down. Might as well try to live up to it for that matter . . .

**Before concluding the interview, Paul tells us that he's "as happy now as I was when we started—we don't have any money, but we've been at the bottom and it doesn't scare us at all." We tell him we can appreciate his attitude. He thanks us, adding "I think we're doing something that no one did before. The Sex Pistols pretended to do this. But this is just naturally us. We don't want to be stars and shit—but we're sort of slipping into it."**

What if the money becomes real good??"I don't think so . . . "

That's a powerful incentive.

"No. It really isn't when you see the ramifications that are going to come along with it. Because we are uncomfortable now with the little tiny stardom of signing autographs. That's cool, but I would not like to be . . . even like Michael Stipe or something . . . "

* * * *

**By the time we re-enter the auditorium, we are both seeing double (and maybe even triple). The place is packed.**

**"We can't find Bob," Paul says into the microphone. "Has anyone seen Bob?" (Bob is actually sitting with some fans in the audience—but no one knows this until much later.) "Oh, well, this might be fun . . . "**

**The Replacements begin playing, replacing the lost Bob with a roadie—and later an usher—during the opening part of their set. They begin with a dynamic "Color Me Impressed," followed by an *incredibly* sloppy "Johnny B. Goode" that couldn't have been any more powerful if it were Chuck Berry playing it in '58 or the Stones in '66. "Bob! Bob!" chants the audience. "Bob?" asks Paul. "Fuck Bob!" He is obviously a bit perturbed.**

**Chris is a terrific drummer. Tommy is a terrific bass player (though he wouldn't want to admit it). They play Alex Chilton's "September Gurls," the intro riffs to "Sweet Home Alabama" and "Substitute," and a great "Unsatisfied" before Bob rejoins them in the middle of "Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out." "He's late. Don't clap for him," says Tommy. Bob looks apologetic. Paul still looks perturbed, but says "*Now* we got it . . . "**

**They wail through "Bastards Of Young," "Left Of The Dial" (one of last year's best rock songs), "Waitress In The Sky" (pssst . . . Westerberg's sister is a "flight attendant") and a whole bunch of other songs from *Tim* and *Let It Be*. They cover "Black Diamond," 'Takin' Care Of Business," "Polk Salad Annie," a snippet of "Folsom Prison Blues" and "20th Century Boy." Maybe to compensate (maybe not), Bob is playing some fine guitar licks, interplaying with Paul. They sound "awful"—sloppy, hitting wrong notes everywhere, missing cues-and positively, absolutely wonderful.**

**"I'd like to mention that the band is breaking up and we'll never be back again," Paul says at the end of the show.**

**The Truth: On this particular night, the Replacements are one of the greatest rock 'n' roll bands in the universe. ■**

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")

ROBERT MATHEU

# REPLACEMENTS

**HOME:** Left of the dial.

**AGE:** Bastards of young.

**PROFESSION:** World's Greatest Rock 'n' Roll Band 1987.

**HOBBIES:** Dealing with them "nightclub jitters," "magic pants" & plaids, Alex Chilton, loving rock 'n' roll, hating "rock 'n' roll," playing *rock 'n' roll.*

**LAST BOOK READ:** *Elvis: The Final Years* by Jerry Hopkins.

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Making people laugh.

**QUOTE:** "I don't know."

**PROFILE:** These guys get a bad rap. One day they might be drunk; next day, not so drunk. One day, great onstage; next day, not so, with only moments of greatness. People say they're "the bad boys of rock." If they were boffing 12-year-old girls and doing tons of drugs and selling millions of records—instead of going back after a show to call their girlfriends, making about as much as they'd make in a factory but having fun, being mischievous but basically kind-hearted, and not selling many records but actually being as honest in their own way as John Lennon was in his—they'd be revered. Still, the music's what will matter in the end.

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

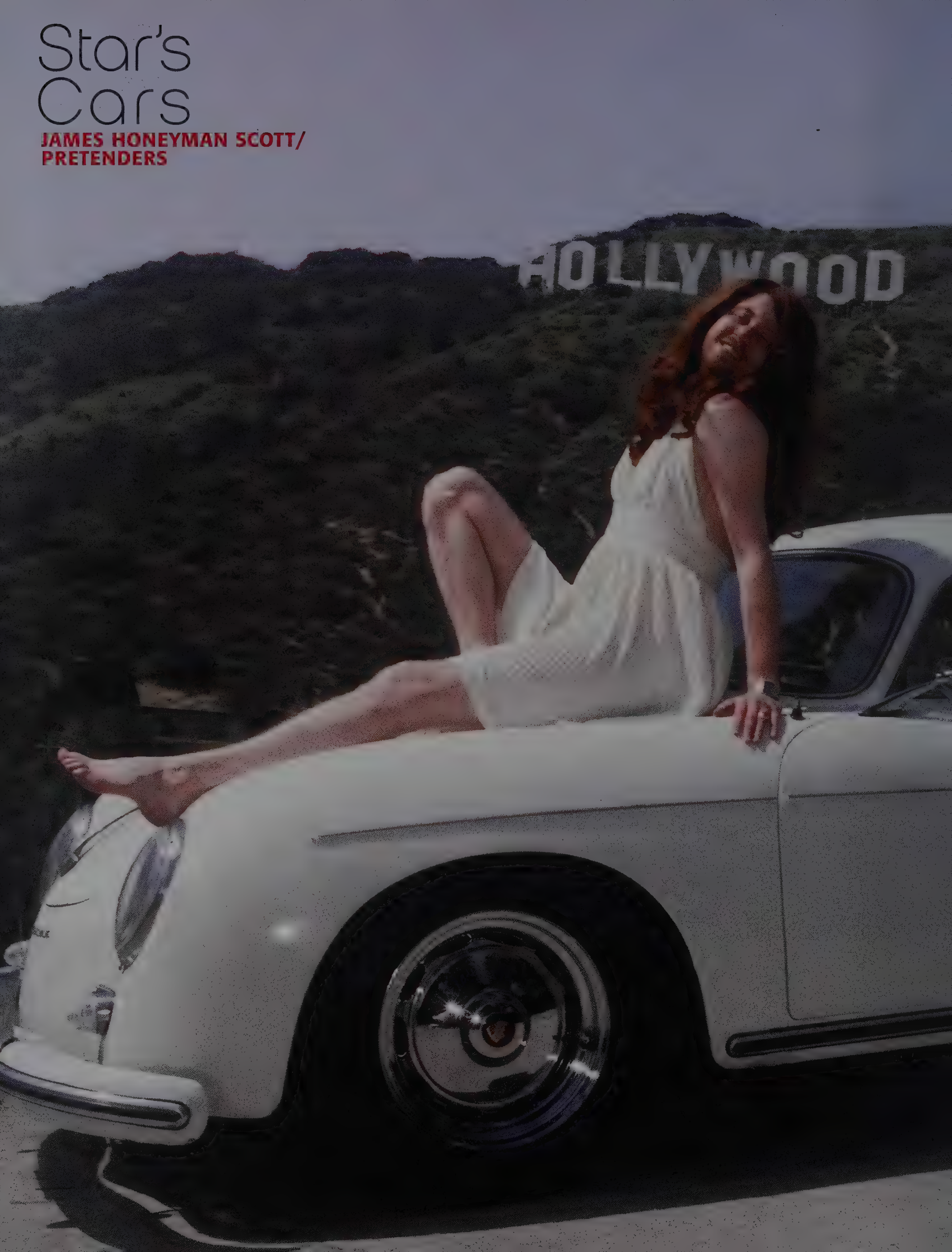
***Authentic*** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

BOY HOWDY! ™

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**

# Star's Cars

**JAMES HONEYMAN SCOTT/ PRETENDERS**



I can't exactly remember why I bought the Pretenders' "Stop Your Sobbing" 45 as an import at Dearborn Music, but I'm sure it had something to do with the fetching foto of Chrissie Hynde on the back of the picture sleeve that stirred memories of Sandie Shaw. When I turned the CREEM staff on to the single, Susan Whitall immediately agreed with my enthusiasm and deputized me to bring the Pretenders into the Boy Howdy! fold.

Although I'd already seen them a few times, I first met Jimmy in the balcony of the Hollywood Palladium at a Ramones show. We hit it off big time from the get-go, and a meeting with fellow Herefordshirian Martin Chambers soon followed. The Pretenders were cut from the same fabric as the Faces, a band that the three mannish members were very enamored of. One of their better Faces-style bits during those early encores entailed Martin having one of the crew line up four or so paper cups full of beer along the top of Pete's amp, and then knocking them off one by one as he would bounce sticks off his ride cymbal—with great accuracy.

Jokes were constantly being directed at the singer. On the tour bus one morning before leaving Cleveland, Chrissie was telling a local journalist from the *Plain Dealer* about how she'd hopped up on stage the night before with Iggy Pop to sing with a local bar band. While she raved on about how she was sure that Iggy would never have gotten onstage with any *other* chick singer, the rest of the band laughed and poked fun as they read the latest issue CREEM which featured a 1/3 page photo of Iggy embracing Debbie Harry onstage. Needless to say, things were pretty quiet in the front of the bus during the long drive to Detroit.

Then there was the time in Tennessee that Jimmy and I hightailed it back to the hotel to let road manager Stan Tippins know that the last time we saw Chrissie, her feet were dangling out the back window of a Memphis Police cruiser.

In the Spring of 1982, after the last tour had ended in Japan, Jimmy came back to Hollywood for a stay on my couch. One day while he was going through some of my old issues of CREEM, he came across the classic photos of Keith Moon clad in a fabulously frilly dress, parasol in hand. We both agreed that it had been far too long since such fashion sense had been publicly exhibited, and that an update was long overdue (that Jim was still sporting his post tour beard only made the concept all the more appealing). Needing to find the proper attire for such an event, we made a quick run over to see our good friend Bobbie Kaminski, rummaged through her closet full of antique clothes, and *voila!* Having found the perfect fit (with matching wig no less), we were off to the hills, camera in hand.

Jimmy left for Texas for a short visit with his wife Peggy Sue, with plans to eventually return to London. The last time I spoke with him was when he called me at two in the morning to tell me that he had just played with his all time favorite band, the Beach Boys. Jumping up and down on the other end of the phone, he couldn't contain himself. He was already planning a repeat performance and asked me to meet him a couple of nights later in Houston. But then he decided instead to go back to London a little earlier.

The photo we'd done was set to run in the August 1982 issue of CREEM, but I called Charlie Auringer the day I got the call of Jim's death and asked him to pull it. Unpublished until now, I offer these images as a testimonial to a great guitarist, a good friend and a wonderful guy. His greatest gift was to entertain, whether it was in front of 5,000 people or just five. I love him as much for the sense of humor he shared with me as I do for the music he created. We had a few drinking club mottos, one of them being: "It's good to be king!" To you, Jim. You're a king.

*—Robert Matheu*

# THE HEAD ON THE CURE

By [illegible] 1 December 1986

Photo by [illegible]

IMAGINE BEING SENT BACK THROUGH TIME! The Cure's first album comes out in 1979. It's called *Three Imaginary Boys*. The band consists of Robert Smith, who plays guitar, sings and writes the songs, Michael Dempsey, who plays bass, and Laurence "Lol" Tolhurst, who plays drums. All three are from England, as is their album.

Same LP comes out in the States a little later, minus Hendrix's 'Foxy Lady' and three other tracks. It's called *Boys Don't Cry*, it features that song, a few more new ones, and "Killing An Arab," their debut single based on *The Stranger*, by zany humorist Albert Camus. Song's protagonist is on a beach, standing over an "Arab." Should he kill him? Key line: "Whichever I choose amounts to the same/Absolutely nothing." Anyway, he kills him.

It's their last American album for some time.

Next up are *Seventeen Seconds* and *Faith*. The Cure's personnel has changed. The band used to be abrasive; here, they become silky smooth. Smith used to almost sneer his lyrics; now, they're occasionally inaudible, purposely subliminal. There are keyboards. Prior dabblings in kiddie existentialism finally result in cheery tunes the likes of "At Night," "The Final Sound," "The Drowning Man" and "The Funeral Party." Yee-hah! A nice single called "Charlotte Sometimes" precedes *Pornography*, the very odd Cure album of 1982 that begins with the words "It doesn't matter if we all die" and ends with "I must fight this sickness/Find a cure." Between both lyrics are unusual songs about "creatures kissing in the rain," animals dying, and my two fave Cure lines: "Is it always like this?" and "I will never be clean again." It should be understood that around this time the Cure lose many fans.

The Cure seem to disband. Smith plays guitar for Siouxsie and the Banshees (Lord knows why). Tolhurst produces a band called And Also the Trees, Smith collaborates with Banshee Steve Severin (Lord knows why) for a one-off band called the Glove, whose major claim to fame is titling their album *Blue Sunshine*.

It is the name of a movie made in 1977 featuring stars the caliber of Zalman King, Mark Goddard (Don in *Lost In Space*!) and Robert Walden (Rossi in *Lou Grant*!)—and also a bunch of people whose hair falls out 10 years after taking really potent LSD who then become brutal killers. It's great—*and* available on videotape.

Suddenly, an about-face. The Cure are back together. And the next bunch of singles are called "Let's Go To Bed, "The Walk" and "The Lovecats," and they do not seem the work of the same band. They are poppy, they are peppy, they are catchy, and they do not include lyrics like "leave me to die/You won't remember my voice." These same singles end up on several different Sire compilations. Sire also releases *The Top* in 1984, an album that seems slightly unfocused and surreal.

The Cure sign to Elektra. Elektra opts not to release *Concert*, the band's live album. Instead, they wait for 1985's *The Head On The Door*. Significantly, an advance cassette of that very album arrives at *CREEM* the day it folds. The Cure know nothing of this.

"In Between Days" and "Close To Me" become actual *radio hits* for the Cure in the States. The Cure are now becoming a "big draw," filling large American concert halls.

In 1986, Elektra releases *Standing On A Beach—The Singles*, a greatest hits album, sort of, and the Cure tour this country and fill more halls than ever. This month: the Cure hit the cover of *CREEM* and entire worlds crumble.

Synopses are great!

### WHY THE CURE THEMSELVES ARE GREAT

1. They have recorded nothing—*nothing*—that is crap.
2. They have continually evolved. None of their records sound at all similar.
3. They have a profound sense of humor.
4. They have confronted such abstracts as Life and Death in their songs, in a catchy and pithy manner.
5. They write exemplary pop songs.
6. They have illustrated the universal truth Leonard Cohen described in his revelatory "Paper Thin Hotel": "You go to heaven once you've been to hell."
7. They are once and for all truly "psychedelic" in their imagery; not in the self-conscious manner of, say, the Three O'Clock, but more along the lines of the Entirely-Unknown-By-The-Members-Of-The-Band R.E.M. Precept. That is, make all your song titles sound like they'd fit right in on *After Bathing At Baxter's*.
8. They are heavily imitated by bands that have never heard them.

### RECENTLY THOUGHT-OF, UNRELATED ASIDE

Great album from the late '60s called *Trilogy For The Masses*, by Ford Theatre, from Massachusetts. ABC ABCS-658. Liner note excerpt by Tom Phillips, contributing editor of *Jazz & Pop*: "All the lyrics are in the second person, addressed to us. We're on the spot and there are very few of us who won't see parts of ourselves in these lines, or recognize the tension that builds up in these long, corrosive instrumental breaks."

### EVEN MORE RECENTLY THOUGHT-OF, UNRELATED ASIDE

Writer Chuck Eddy, of Ann Arbor fame and more—heck, he even writes for *us*—has to my face and in the local press compared the Smiths to James Taylor. For that matter, so has Robert Christgau in his Consumer Guide. Neither thought they were doing the Smiths any favors. But it's an astute insight, considering that Taylor's first album—and half of *Sweet Baby James*—consists not of sickly-sweet pop-tunes, but songs by someone seriously considering suicide.

### ROBERT SMITH HIMSELF, TALKING TO ME ON A GREAT BIG HILL NEAR DETROIT

"I mean, I still don't think that much different to how I was before it all sort of started, with *Seventeen Seconds*. I think I'm sort of *balanced*—as balanced as I'm ever going to be, I was.

"It's just that there was a period for about two or two-and-a-half years when I was—I mean, it would have logically ended in me killing myself. That was very obvious to all the people around me. They—like Simon [Gallup, Cure bassist] and Laurence, I think, who were the two closest to me in that period—were very surprised. They thought at one point that one morning they were gonna knock on my door and I wasn't going to answer it. Which surprises me that it was that obvious, because, I mean, I'm sure everybody goes through that—it's just that I was in the position where people were *expecting it* from me, they were, like, looking for me to, 'Go on, show us what it's like.' It was very odd—and that's what I wanted to escape from. Because I thought it's not actually that much *fun* living for other people.

"And it's like lots of people *enjoy* it who are in groups, they want people to believe that they're living on the edge, all that rock 'n' roll cack, and it's nonsense. Because it actually had nothing to do with the group—the group was just like an expression of how we were *all* feeling."

Robert Smith is saying these things perhaps an hour before he's to go onstage and perform many of his songs in front of the 15,000 Cure fans that inhabit Detroit. He now has very short hair, if you're interested. Why? "Paradoxically, because I got fed up with people talking about my haircut. I had it shaved off." It used to be longer, stick out and stuff. "I should've done something less drastic," says he, reasonably.

Smith is talking to me and Bill Holdship. I'm there because I want to talk to the guy who actually used words like "I will never be clean again" as lyrics; you'll have to ask Bill why he was there. Smith, a few minutes before a photo session, is dealing with America and magazines and people that ask him questions about his mental health.

"I don't *remember* writing a lot of it, particularly *Pornography*," says he. "I don't remember writing much of it at all. I understand it, I know most of the references that are in the songs, but they're so disjointed, it took me a long time to figure out. A lot of it was written when I wasn't really—I wasn't sitting down and writing, I don't remember sitting down and writing—I just remember going to the studio and having this big sheaf of words. I was so *possessive* around that time, of the record. I was very difficult to work with. Simon and Laurence didn't enjoy it at all."

Do you think you're normal? Do you think you're a nut? Do you think you're a gloomy guy??

"No. Because I never—I suppose it's a paradox, but because I never did it in *public*. I never wandered about, going, 'Life—how dare it?' Because it's the same for everyone, and everyone meets the same fate. But the paradox being obviously that I *did* perform it, more publicly than most people do, actually go onstage and sing about it. But that was the only thing that seemed to have any point to it, anyway. The performing of those songs. No one really seemed to *like* them."

Not true, of course. But Smith himself speaks of *Pornography* almost reverently, as if the album were the turning point between the Cure As Artists and The Cure As Entertainers. There's no denying that things changed afterward.

"The reaction against it wasn't really because of how I was feeling personally," he says. "It was because I didn't want the Cure to become a caricature of itself. I did not want us to be involved in a style of music which I no longer felt comfortable with. I will vehemently defend anything we did up to *Pornography*—*Pornography* is actually my favorite Cure album, because I've never heard a record like it. There are records that have similarities to it, but I never agreed with people who, when we started doing things like 'Let's Go To Bed' and 'The Walk' and 'The Love Cats', said, 'That's it.'

"I don't think what we've ever done since has in any way compromised that, because all those records existed at the time, and they mean whatever they mean to you at the time. Obviously if you were to listen to *Pornography* after 'The Love Cats', and imagine it's the same group, you'd probably think very differently of it than if you'd actually got it firsthand, and seen everything unfold. It's *far* less difficult to understand if you've actually heard all the Cure stuff, in the loony sense. Even though it doesn't make that much sense either way you listen to it.

"It was because I wanted the group—I didn't want to be 'Robert Smith, ex-Cure,' so I thought the only way to escape that was to keep the vehicle of the Cure moving. I thought the best way to do that was to write the most extreme song, the most anti-*Pornography* type of song, with the most banal elements, and that was 'Let's Go To Bed'. And once we'd done that, it sort of cracked the whole thing open, and people no longer thought of us as like, very doomy.

"We're still able to—like on *The Head On The Door* album, we still have a couple of songs, like 'Sinking', and even the lyrical content of 'In Between Days'. Even though it's like a pop song, it wasn't really pop like Mr. Mister pop. And so there is still that, everything's sort of tinged ever so slightly with a more sort of *darker* side. Everything we do—but then I find it very difficult to write without having that sense of fatality sort of like creeping around the corner.

"And I think we've retained quite a high percentage of our original following. I still think that a lot of people, even if they don't like what we do as intensely, they still respect the fact that when we want to make something good, we can. And I think that way as well.

"Obviously, a lot of the things we've done in the past two or three years, I haven't felt as emotional about. But there are certain songs in which I do. I mean, 'In Between Days' is one, and 'Kyoto Song' is about the closest thing to an old-style Cure song—those two and 'Sinking'. But it would have been impossible, I realized, for us to continue like that—because you *do* parody yourself after a while, and you're just singing and your songs are all slightly the same.

"But the thing was, each year that we did it, it got worse and worse, darker and darker. The only logical conclusion was for it all to just fall apart, and probably end up swinging from something. I wasn't prepared for that. I mean, Ian Curtis was my generation's suicide. I didn't really want to follow in his footsteps."

**WHY HE WON'T**

It's not for me to say, of course, nor you. But I believe that Robert Smith and the Cure will not end up hanging from a rope, swinging in the wind, while fans worldwide point to his recent head-shaving as The Ultimate Sign Of Total Alienation. Because *Pornography* is an old album now. Because Robert Smith—shall we call him Bob?—is a pop songwriter. Because there is an element of subversion in even the most recent Cure material that shows Robert Smith as an enterprising, highly creative recording artist, with a taste for the unlikely. None of his records sound the same; none of them sound like anybody else's. "In Between Days" does not *really* recall New Order, especially lyrically; if "A Night Like This" hints at the melodic invention of "Boys Don't Cry," fine. They're both great songs.

"The stuff that I've been writing," says Smith, "I mean, we won't record for a while yet, because the stuff that I'm writing at the moment is really too diverse. I mean, *Head On The Door* is quite diverse, but there were some similarities between the songs. But a lot of the new stuff is really—some of it's so ludicrous, I don't know. Some of the songs are atonal, like we haven't really done before. And I think if we do something like that, I'm gonna have to be really sure about it. Because we're no longer in the position where we can just, like, throw out a record and expect people to dismiss it without dismissing the whole of our career, really.

"That's the most amazing thing for me about what the Cure does. There is nothing in what we've done that I would do differently. I would do it differently if I did it all *now*, but there's nothing I would change from when it was done at the time.

"*Seventeen Seconds* could be produced a lot better, but it was perfect for how it was. The voice was supposed to be almost so you could barely hear it. I wanted you to have to, like, get around the drum kit to hear what I was actually singing, because it was that sort of record. But if were were in the position we're in now, and to release a record like that, we would have to be so sure—because we'd have to put up with so much flak, from record companies, from everyone, saying 'This is *suicide*, doing this.'

"I'm not worried about *that* aspect of it, if I think that it's valid. If I'm sure about it. But it's just that I'm not sure. Because I've got such a reactionary nature, I'm a bit loathe to do something to people—'Well, *this* will fuck 'em all up . . . ' "But isn't that *exactly* the sort of thing you might do??" Well, I do it if I'm sure about it, but it'd be easy to get some screaming nuns and stuff and say, 'All right, this

# CREEM

# BEASTIE BOYS
# LAY IT DOWN, CLOWNS

## BEASTIE BOYS TAKE OVER?

BY CHUCK EDDY • MAY 1987

PHOTO BY ROBERT MATHEU

> *“They took the doors off their hinges and moved them around. They flooded two floors with the fire hoses. They plugged up the toilets and destroyed the furniture. They terrorized the other guests. They were just having fun.”*
>
> —*Stephen Davis*
> Hammer of the Gods, *1985*

***At 32 minutes past two the morning of 16 January 1987, two Beastie Boys broke into my West Hollywood hotel room and dumped a wastebasket of extremely wet water on my head, my bed, the carpeting and my Converse All-Stars. (I’d stupidly left the chain-lock unsecured, and I suppose they bribed the night clerk into giving them a key.) Earlier that evening, after Pee-Wee Herman had visited their dressing room and before they appeared on Joan Rivers’ show, the Beasties were tossing parsley at me, dropping ice cubes in my hair, and “dissin’” (graffiti-artist lingo for “saying bad things about”) my brown socks and flannel shirt. I interpreted all of this to mean that they did not like me.***

***But I don’t feel alone. Just days before, they’d been evicted from the Sunset Marquis for throwing chairs out their window into the swimming pool. And that week, they’d also become the first group ever to be censored on American Bandstand. Dick Clark, who’d put up with Johnnies Rotten and Lydon in past episodes, apparently determined Adrock’s mid-song crotch-grab was just too much. The Beasties had previously been banned from the Holiday Inn chain after they’d cut a hole in the floor of one suite to serve as a passageway to the one directly below; they’d been***

banned from CBS Records headquarters after allegedly ripping off a camera at a label party. And MCA brags that he punched a Bay Area Music interviewer in the face not too long ago. These guys are total jerks, and they've got the fastest-selling debut album in CBS history.

MCA, real name Adam Yauch, says he's skimmed through *Hammer Of The Gods*, a book that depicts Led Zeppelin's early career as one massive, Satanic orgy, complete with fishing for sharks out hotel windows and sicking the prize catches on baked-bean marinated groupies. "It happens that we are living up to that reputation, but it's not intentional," MCA tells me. "We respect what they did. They were the only band that never buckled under to their label, and they sold more records than anybody." Beastie Mike D, whose stage handle is shortened from Michael Diamond, is wearing a *Houses Of The Holy* T-shirt. The first noises you hear on the Boys' *Licensed To Ill* album are John Bonham's drums, lifted from Zep's mega-swing classic "When The Levee Breaks." I ask Mike D what his favorite LP of 1986 was, and he answers *Led Zeppelin IV*.

> ***"There's a feeling I get***
> ***When I look to the West***
> ***And my spirit is crying for leaving . . .***
> ***Made up my mind***
> ***To make a new start***
> ***Goin' to California***
> ***With an achin' in my heart."***
>
> ***—Page & Plant***
> *Led Zeppelin IV, 1971*

Upon arriving in Los Angles to meet the most famous Caucasian rap trio in the history of Western Civilization, I found that their record company has sent a limousine to the airport to pick me up. I'm taking one of those huge black ones where the celebrities can look out but the peons can't look in, and of course I've never even *touched* one before, and I thought it was obscene. The driver gave me the scenic route down to Sunset Boulevard, and he pointed out Englebert Humperdink's abodes, and we passed U.C.L.A. The driver showed me this monument made of four white columns at the top of a small hill. He said Al Jolson was buried there.

Like Gigolo Al, and like Bob Wills and Elvis Presley and the Rolling Stones and the disco Bee Gees as well, the Beastie Boys are white people making what is supposed to be black music. Like Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, who wrote all of the Coasters' hits and whose "Girls, Girls, Girls" MCA claims did not influence the groups very similar "Girls," and like the Dictators, whose *Go Girl Crazy* anticipated punk and whose White Castle infatuation MCA claims did not influence MCA claims had no effect on his crew's own sliders-by-the-bag fetish, the Beasties are young middle-class Jewish males chronicling the dilemma of urban-American teen hooligancy. Or rather, in the Beastie Boys' case, half-Jewish. "Purely coincidentally, we each have one Jewish parent," explains MCA. Adrock and Mike D, now 17 and 19 old respectively, grew up in Manhattan; MCA, 20 comes from Brooklyn Heights. MCA and Mike D "have been friends forever and were boys together," MCA says; Adrock, a.k.a. Adam Horvitz, met the other two in junior high school. Noted playwright Israel Horvitz, Adrock's dad, left home when the Beastie was a baby. MCA's first criminal act was setting a print shop on fire.

"All the kids from our high school listened to Deep Purple, crap like that," Mike D says. "When you see that shit it doesn't make you want to go out and play it." Yauch, Horvitz and Diamond opted for the (then) unpopular alternative, dying their hair orange or shaving it off, checking out the Stimulators and Sham 69 at New York clubs, and eventually starting their own hardcore squads.

"Everyone we knew was in a band," Mike D says. "That's what was cool about punk." The original Beastie Boys comprised Yauch, Diamond and two more; Horivitz' band, The Young & The Useless, would open shows. Eventually, the combos merged. After releasing the 7-inch *Polly Wog Stew* EP on the Rat Cage label in 1982, lured by a Gotham rap subculture that seemed to parallel punk in the do-it-yourself-music department, the Beasties decided to expand their horizons.

"We went into the studio and recorded 10 songs, and we did the song 'Cookie Puss' as a joke," MCA remembers. "We were making fun of Malcolm McLaren, and the whole downtown art scene that was exploiting hip-hop." A poor mix caused eight tunes to be shelved, but "Cookie Puss" came out as a 12-inch single, backed with a rasta-toasting/ Musical Youth parody called "Beastie Revolution." The A-side was a seemingly sexist and racist stylus-scratch rendering of a pornographic phone call to an ice cream sandwich store, and it turned out to be 1983's funniest novelty record. Rick Rubin, a club jockey whose band, Hose, did grunge-metal versions of Ohio Players and Rick James numbers, heard the disc and liked it. Beastie gigs gradually evolved from "a lot of new wave Wild-Style Burner Style music with the turntable next to the drum riser (sez MCA) to all-the-way-live rap, and Rubin produced 1985's awesome "Rock Hard"/Party's Gettin' Rough"/ "Beastie Groove" EP. The record kidnapped sections outright from AC/DC's "Back In Black" and Zep's "Black Dog." The Beasties chanted, "I'm a man who needs no introduction/Got a big tool of reproduction."

Furthering their ironman-funk synthesis on the "Soundtrack From The Video She's On It" single, and helped along by a distribution deal Rubin's Def Jam Records had established with CBS, the trio burst onto MTV in late '85. A year later, after a summer of opening for the suddenly huge Rubin-produced Run D.M.C., the Beasties were bona fide stars; within six weeks of its release, *Licensed To Ill* had already sold over a million copies, and was kicking its way up to the Top 20. If you go to high school or live in a college dorm, you most likely know the thing forwards and backwards by now. *Licensed To Ill* has pushed rap into the whitest corridors of America's heartland, and (along with D.M.C., Metallica and the Rubin-produced Slayer) had made the future safe for dangerous teenage music, a form that seemed to have died. CBS, concentrating on Bruce S. and Michael J., has an unexpected blockbuster on its hands. And the Beastie Boys are playing their fifteen minutes of fame to the hilt. "Five years from now I might be selling used cars on the lot," MCA says. "I really don't give a fuck, 'cause I'm having so much fun now."

For example: I'm at the hotel, as are members of the Beastie entourage, which consists of Sean, their hepcat British manager, Hurricane, a brawny deejay who carries lots of gold junk around his neck, Cey, who has known the Beasties since childhood and now serves as roadie and astrologer and all-around nice guy, and Eloise, an overweight go-go dancer who's supposed to look "sexy" when she strips down to her black lace, I guess, but mostly just comes off as gruesome. The Beasties aren't there, and the limo driver says it's time to leave for the Rivers Show. All of a sudden a luxury machine burns rubber around the corner, just missing the limo, and skids to a halt in front of the hotel gate. MCA jumps out and runs inside, and Adrock takes the wheel even though he's never driven a stick shift before. MCA's done doing what he was doing, and the treacherous three are ready to go now, but they're not riding in the limo; they've just rented a Town Car after getting bored with a Ferrari and a Rolls, and they don't want their dollars to go to waste. "We ride three in the front, you in the back," Mike D tells me. "That's the rule."

The limousine goes first, and we follow. The auto I'm in is manned by derelicts: MCA's wearing a wrinkled long-sleeve white button-down, a black leather jacket, and a five o'clock (or five day, maybe) beard-shadow; Adrock has an "Appalachian Basketball Camp" shirt, a red Texaco baseball cap and a light-blue windbreaker; Mike D, skinnier, and nerdier-looking than his cohorts, has a gold Volkswagon pendant, black horned-rim glasses, and an earring. Their jeans have holes, their Nikes lack laces (some new fad, I think), and I'm no queer but I know that these are not the prettiest men I've ever seen. Anyway, we're chasing the limo, and Metallica's "Battery" is blasting from our tape deck, and the dudes in front of me are banging their heads towards the windshield as if they constituted one orgasm. They release their seatbacks so they can ride horizontally, they "accidentally" bump bumpers with the limo a few times, they shout catcalls at the usual feminine suspects. ("Before we were successful we used to stand at the streetcorner and yell at girls," Mike D later informs Joan Rivers. "Now we can sit in a Ferrari and do it, and it's a lot more effective.") And the doo-wop along with the cassette, which plays the Coasters, Elvis, Roxanne Shante, Marvin Gaye, ? and the Mysterians, Stevie Wonder, and—as a tribute to their adolescent home-boys, I gather—Deep Purple.

CREEM™

*"It becomes hard to remember that "Smoke On The Water" was never a good song and was barely a good joke—and even harder to remember that old bromide about what happens to those who don't learn from the past."*

—Mark Moses
Boston Phoenix, December 30, 1986

Afoot in our land is disillusionment like has not been seen since the Watergate years. For the generation weaned on Danny Bonaduce, awakened by Haldeman, Erlichman and Dean, and enlightened by punk and its progeny, this disillusionment casts doubt and cynicism on not only our leaders, but on the mass media that stimulate our national mood. Be a sourpuss and call it premature nostalgia if you need to, but the current interest in early '70s rock is no retreat; fact is, punk promised more and then failed more miserably than any other rock 'n' roll ever has. When Redd Kross covers Kiss, when "Walk This Way" goes Top 10, when the Golden Palominos hire Jack Bruce, it's not retreat-rather, it's a necessary return to unfinished business. If the Sex Pistols never happened, we'd probably better off than we are now. And if the Beastie Boys don't come right done and say this, their record certainly implies it. To me, the most amazing thing about *Licensed To Ill*'s success is the youth of its audience. That children of the '80s are buying it proves how universal its ideas are. Because to get all of the details, you have to be a child of the '70s.

As I've said, Bonzo slapping his drumkit starts off the thing. But before the vinyl's been exhausted, we've also heard musical or verbal snippets from Black Sabbath's "Sweet Leaf," Zep's "The Ocean," War's "Low Rider," Steve Miller's "Fly Like An Eagle" and "Take The Money And Run" (plus they did a cool a *capella* "Joker" during the Joan Rivers rehearsals), Brownsville Station's "Smokin' In The Boys Room," Aerosmith's "No More No More," Creedence's "Down On The Corner," and some Barry White tune whose title alludes me. It's no accident the record starts with a song called "Rhymin' And Stealin'"—the oeuvres of Bill Haley and Bobby Fuller and Kurtis Blow and Schoolly-D are plundered, too. But *Licensed To Ill* isn't just about creative in-joke robbery; if it was, it wouldn't be worth much. All those borrowed bits and pieces are used to make connections, to outline the perimeters of the youth culture on which the Beasties' B-boy-brat stance depends. When I asked MCA about the lyric "sit around the house, get high and watch the tube," he answered, "We're not using it because it's in a Steve Miller song. We're using it because it's a good line."

So in the long run, what makes *Licensed To Ill* a great album—one of the best of the last year, and one of a mere handful of *listenable* recent ones on major labels- is that it's got great songs. First off, they *sound* great; Rubin is one of the few current producers out there who refuse to sell out rhythm to disco-syndrome water-torture monotony, and this album's got his biggest beats ever. With him the Beasties could get by on their cockiness alone. But what I really mean by great songs is great *songwriting*, by which I guess I just mean common sense. Wiffleball bats and swirlies and Phyllis Diller and Kentucky Fried Chicken and Budweiser and Rice-a-Roni and angel dust are things we live with in this world, and sometimes even things we talk about in real life, but I'll be damned if anybody else has ever written songs about then, and even if somebody has, they never wrote a couplet as unpretentiously jocular as "My pistol is loaded, I shot Betty Crocker/Deliver Colonel Sanders down to Davy Jones locker" or "Went to the prom, bought a fly blue rental/Got six girlies in my Lincoln Continental." It's all about specificity, I reckon. And when the words fall together into a fantastic delinquent anthem like "Fight For Your Right (To Party)"or a fantastic rock star rave-up like "No Sleep Till Brooklyn" (with glaciated guitar from Slayer's Kerry King) or a fantastic ghetto-gangster boast like "The New Style," I just can't figure why a person would resist. If being "offended" is what bugs you, you don't love rock 'n' roll.

*When I woke up late in the afternoon*
*She'd taken all the things from inside of my room*
*I found myself naked in the middle of the floor*
*She'd taken the bed, and the chest of drawers*
*The mirror, the TV, the new guitar chords*
*My remote control and my old skateboard*
*She robbed us blind, she took all we own*
*And the boys blamed me for bringing me home."*

—Beastie Boys
"She's Crafty," 1986

There will always be party-poopers whose knees jerk whenever rap is mentioned; it takes no "talent," they say, *anybody* could do it. For all I know they're right, but I don't think it matters—if punk should have taught us anything, it's that rock is the property of ordinary people, not supergeniuses. It's not what somebody "could" do that's important; it's what they *do*. And though when I listen to *Licensed To Ill* I wonder why nobody has ever accomplished the Beasties accomplish here, I'm nevertheless more cynical about hip-hop than they are—to my ears it peaked around 1982, and (save for a couple big acts who transcended the form) it's mainly cliché-recapitulation, best exemplified by all those "Roxanne, Roxanne: answer-records and television theme mastermixes. According to the Beasties, if I lived in New York, where "you here it in the clubs and you hear it on the boxes in the streets," Adrock says—I'd think differently. "There's more copycat metal than copycat rap," MCA opines, hitting me in my soft spot. "We hereby challenge Bon Jovi to an MC contest," taunts Mike D.

To be fair to those still skeptical about this stuff, I thought the Beastie Boys were less than brilliant live-reminded me more of a high school talent show than a rock gig, and all the somersaults and funky chickens and spastic ticks didn't conceal the fact that they dance even worse than Madonna, who they toured the country with in '85 and were scheduled to eat dinner with the evening after they doused my bed. Of course, the Rivers show may have been an atypical performance; "they told us if we fuck up one more time on live TV, we're done," Mike D had related earlier. Maybe they were toned down, or maybe they were over-rehearsed, or maybe I just haven't seen enough rap shows to know I'm supposed to watch when all that's onstage is a turntable and three kids with microphones. The interview with Joan was certainly entertaining—MCA sat in her chair, Adrock on her desk, Mike D next to her with his arm around her; they gave her an apple with a bit taken out, and told her they were working on a concerto at Julliard. When we'd walked into her studio that afternoon, we'd seen a picture of Run-D.M.C. on the wall between Dr. Ruth and Vincent Price, so perhaps Joan digs this boogaloo thang enough to invite the Boys back. Don't know whether she appreciated the *Extended Sexual Orgasm* book they presented her and her hubbie backstage at the end of the night, though.

Well, you can't claim good fortune has spoiled these guys—from what I hear, they've *always* been like this. But they say they enjoy the fame, even if it means meeting dimwits like Dweezil Zappa, and even if they have to put up with fools who ask them whether they're actually black.

"When my mom first heard (the album) she said it sounded like it would be real successful," MCA says, and I expect an A&R department to give her a call any day now. The Beasties have run into a brick wall or two—Michael Jackson, who owns the Beatles' catalog, refused to grant them permission to include their surf-guitar/doo-wop of "I'm Down" on the LP; an intended non-LP B-side called "The Scenario," a murder story that the group calls their best song, proved to be too graphic for CBS. The label also advised (but didn't demand) the Beasties not to call their album *Don't Be A Faggot*, which was its working title. But the threesome is mostly satisfied with the freedom they've been granted, and they realize it's a rare thing in the age of Tipper Gore and Muzak Top 40. Says MCA: "The unique thing about the Def Jam deal is that we get the power to do what we want to do."

The group expects to contribute "The Scenario" to a film soundtrack in the near future. Another unreleased cut, "Desperado," will be included in Rubin's *Tougher Than Leather* flick, due for release this year. Meanwhile. The Beasties are barn-storming America's auditoriums with funk-wavers Fishbone and laff-core phonies Murphy's Law, spreading their decadent sex-and-drugs gospel to the initiated and uninitiated alike. (David Lee Roth asked them to open his tour's concerts, but they wanted to headline this time.) After that, who knows? "I don't know if we'll die doing this," MCA remarks. "And I don't think we should disappoint our audience by letting them know what we got planned." ■

*"When in doubt, whip it out,*
*I got me a rock 'n' roll band,*
*it's a free-for-all."*

—Ted Nugent
"Free For All," 1976

ROBERT MATHEU

# A CREEM EDITOR REMEMBERS

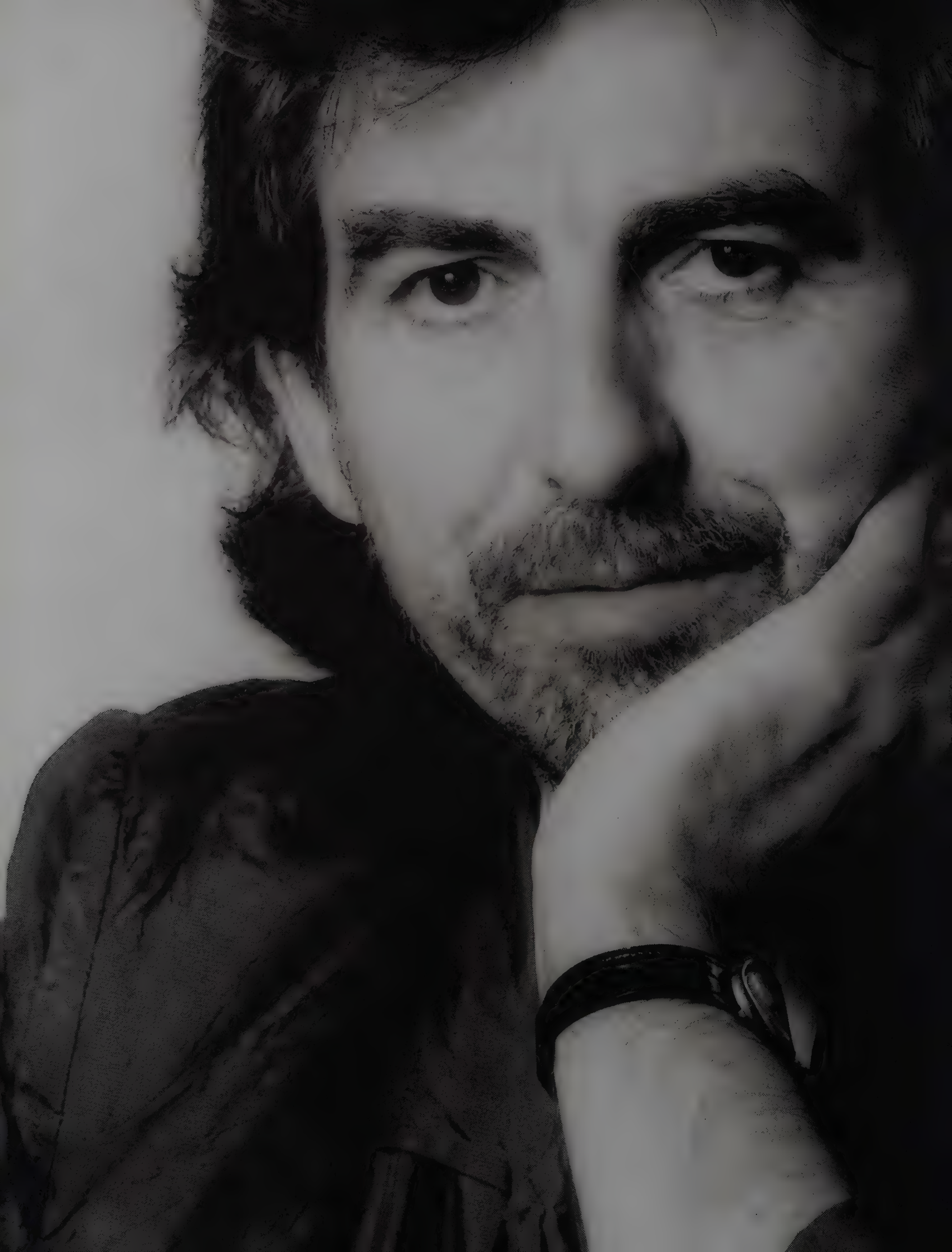
There are loads of CREEM stories to tell, such as the time I answered the editorial phone and Billy Joel was on the other end, angry about a caption ("Dating a moron? Why I am!") that had appeared under a photo of future bride Christie Brinkley. "When you start making fun of my girlfriend, them's fightin' words!" the irate star told me. (Actually, Billy, I tried to explain even back then, the caption was making fun of you, since Christie was the only one in the photo...) But at least half my favorite stories would involve Kordosh. We'd become constant companions, even before new owner Arnold Levitt moved us to L.A. in '87 and threw us into an apartment together for three months. John would interview anyone for CREEM, didn't matter who (just as John would talk to anyone anywhere anytime). He's one of the funniest people I've ever known, especially if a few drinks were involved. So hanging with him—whether he was interviewing Blackie Lawless in Detroit or we were getting thrown out of an L.A. radio station after appearing on air with our faves, the Replacements—was always immensely entertaining.

John could spot bullshit across a crowded room—"Bill, why are these people we don't know kissing us all the time?" he deadpanned several weeks after we'd arrived in L.A.—and there are a ton of Kordosh stories to tell as a result. But the classic one probably remains the day Arnold flew the three of us to New York, shortly before DiMartino left CREEM, because the new publisher wanted to meet some of our long-time Manhattan scribes. The meeting was a late afternoon affair at a pizza & beer joint owned by Arnold's friend. I'm allergic to beer, but John, Dave and the half-dozen writers who showed up were feeling little pain by the time we left for an Arista Records press party at, I believe, a club called Stringfellows, which we figured we could crash before our midnight flight back to Detroit. We met even more NYC writers and longtime phone buddies at the shindig, and drinks were flowing freely enough that I was now feeling no pain . . . when suddenly, the walls closed around us, electronically, like something out of a James Bond movie. We literally appeared to be trapped in this room with no visible means of escape. And suddenly, there, standing behind a podium, bathed in spotlight, was Clive Davis himself. "The last time we did this, you, the tastemakers of our industry, helped to make Whitney Houston a star . . . " he began. God knows how many words later, he finally told us why we were there...to hear "the next great rock supergroup"—none other than GTR!

We then had to sit (or stand) through the entire GTR album. Afterwards, Clive was at the podium again. He wanted to make sure we "tastemakers of America" really "got it" . . . We then had to suffer through a 30-minute (it seemed like hours) "Making of GTR" documentary. Did I forget to mention that all drinks had been cut off when Clive began his presentation? It was a rule, someone told me. No one eats or drinks when Clive's talking. After the video, Clive announced he was going to play the ungodly album for us again. Just to make sure we tastemakers had absorbed it. One. More. Time . . .

"John is going to say something," I suggested to Dave. "No, no, he won't." I always wondered if it was wishful thinking on Dave's part. Because within seconds, from the back of the room, came the roar, slowly and deliberately: "Clive, shut the fuck up! You're boring me!" John's walking down the stairs now, dressed in a black T-shirt with an empty beer bottle (for too long!) in hand, incredulously imploring the tastemakers himself this time: "What's wrong with you people? Why are you putting up with this?" Clive points up the stairway, with an expression on his face not unlike Otis Day's in *Animal House* when the white kids show up at the black club: "I don't know who that gentleman is—but he's ruining it for everyone!" Someone grabs me, absolute *terror* in their eyes: "Omigod! You just can't do that to Clive . . . " It remains one of the more surreal moments of my life. Seconds later, a bemused Arista publicist quickly escorted the three of us (and several CREEM writers) to what must have been the only secret exit in Stringfellows . . . and we tastemakers of America disappeared down several flights of stairs and into the Manhattan night.

*—Bill Holdship*



# *the* GEORGE HARRISON INTERVIEW

BY J. KORDOSH • DECEMBER 1987 AND JANUARY 1988
PHOTOS BY ROBERT MATHEU

***In a plush Warner Bros. Office, Bill Holdship and I listened to George Harrison's first album in over five years,* Cloud Nine. *"I wracked my brain for a title, trying to think of something that didn't have one of the song titles in it," Harrison said later. (He didn't succeed; the title song kicks off the album.) "It was called* Fab *for about half an hour," he added. Since the record was still being mastered, there were only a few cassette copies available, and those strictly for listening within the confines of Warner Bros., who distribute Harrison's Dark Horse label.***

**Cloud Nine *may well be Harrison's best album since 1971's* All Things Must Pass, *his first and most successful post-Beatles offering. It's peppered with uptempo rockers ("Devil's Radio," with a vocal line made for Bob Dylan, "Fish On The Sand," and what appears to be the album's first single, "Got My Mind Set On You") and some pretty funny lyrics ("When We Was Fab" recalls a time "when income tax was all we had" as voices in the background chant "fab!" and "gear!"). In general, it's not the kind of thing you might expect from George Harrison.***

*Since the mid-1970s, Harrison's released only three albums, none of which sold particularly well or met with much critical praise. Harrison got involved with race car driving, gardening and filmmaking—his movie company, Handmade Films, has produced* Withnail And I, Shanghai Surprise, Monty Python At The Hollywood Bowl *and others—and Harrison may have easily been perceived as a dropout from the music business. But the new album—prompted, Harrison says, by being in the right mood for material he's been demoing all along, and by linking up with co-producer Jeff Lynne (of ELO fame)—should change that.*

*Throughout the interview, Harrison was very relaxed and good-humored, smoking French Gitanes cigarettes and drinking tea. Although much of what he says here—particularly about the Beatles being ripped off—might sound vindictive, it was delivered with a casual good-naturedness. Harrison talks about his new album and some of his overlooked work of the latter years, as well as the selling of the Beatles circa 1987 . . . in particular, the Beatles' suit against Capitol-EMI over the commercial use of original Beatles' masters, the Beatles' meeting with Elvis Presley (and his own second meeting, years later), the Beatles' LSD experiences, impressions of Sean Penn and Madonna and life after death.*

*"So what kind of readers does CREEM have?" asked George Harrison. "It's not just Ginger Baker, Jack Bruce and Eric Clapton, is it?" We hope not, but one never really knows.*

---

**Who are some of the players on the new album?**
Well, on drums we've got Ringo and Jim Keltner, and Ray Cooper plays on one track—Ray being the percussion player who used to be with Elton John. He works for our company, Handmade Films. Ringo plays on about four tracks.

**Does he play on "When We Was Fab"?**
Oh, yeah. I mean, before I wrote the song, or when I sat down to write it, I thought, "This one's gonna start with Ringo going, 'One, two, DUHtabumb, DUHtabumb.'" That was the intro in my head; that was the tempo it was always going to be.

**Did you ever think of adding laughter at the end of the song (which vaguely reprises the end of "Within You Without You")?**
No, but we had the little thing from the radio and the sitars (laughs). Isn't that enough?

**Who else is playing?**
All the horn parts were played by Jim Horn. That's his real name, Jim Horn. He played on all those old Duane Eddy things, and he actually did two with me in 1974 (*Dark Horse* and *Extra Texture*). He's very well-known, one of the top sax players in the country. He's brilliant. He made a few solo albums on Shelter Records back in the early '70s and now he's moved from L.A. to Nashville. A lot of musicians seem to have gone down there because there's so much work.

Eric Clapton plays on four tracks; I'm sure you could hear him. Eric has the end solo on "That's What It Takes," he plays on "Devil's Radio," "Wreck Of The Hesperus," and on the title track. And then Elton John plays electric piano on "Cloud Nine"—and he plays piano on "Devil's Radio" and, I believe, "Wreck Of The Hesperus," also. Just to complete the list of people who's on it, Gary Wright plays keyboard, the piano, on a song called "Just For Today," which is a song I wrote from an Alcoholics Anonymous brochure. You know that little leaflet they give out to drunkards, to say to try to live through this day, for today only? And he also plays on "When We Was Fab." All the remaining stuff: bass is Jeff, keyboards, Oberheim, is Jeff, and guitars are me and Jeff. All the little twiddly parts that just crop up, like autoharps, is just me and Jeff, and we also do all the backing voices.

**What prompted "Devil's Radio"?**
I have to go past this little church to take my boy to school and they have a little billboard—just a little board outside the church—saying, "Gossip: The Devil's Radio . . . Don't Be A Broadcaster." That's all. So I thought, that's good, that's a song, and I wrote it going to one of the Eurythmics concerts.

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")

EBET ROBERTS

# RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

**HOME:** Some spicy tamale.

**AGE:** Baby appeal

**PROFESSION:** Hollywood junglemen.

**HOBBIES:** American ghost dancing, buckling down, getting up and jumping, lovin' and touchin, checking out black-eyed blondes, sex rappin', saving the coyotes from the terror of Catholic school.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *Yertle The Turtle* by Dr. Seuss.

**LAST ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Appearing on-stage in nothing but strategically placed socks—and actually getting away with it.

**QUOTE:** "Mommy, where's daddy?"

**PROFILE:** Formed not far from the real land of red hot chili peppers and some spicy tamales, the nucleus of the band began when lead singer Anthony Kiedis did a one-shot metal rap gig with his pals in What Is this. As the band's reputation grew, Kiedis put together a real band that is rapidly becoming known for its blend of rap/funk with metal/punk LPs produced by ex-Gang Of Four Andy Gill and George Clinton—and their incredibly zany live performances.

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

BOY HOWDY!
Creem

***Authentic*** There are zillions of ways to get your name in the papers, but only one way to stake your thirst for CREEM. The quality standards we set down in the dawn of the Seventies have been on a Wild Mouse ride through the Highlands, the Low lands, and the Barstools. Every drop's a hoot.

**Always say "Boy Howdy!"**

I sort of spent a bit of time with Dave Stewart, checking out his live show on—what was that tour called?—Revenge. The Revenge Tour was coming around England and I went to a couple of shows and I thought, "Yeah, I can do this. I can write these." So I wrote a couple of rockers.

**How come we heard Paul McCartney and Julian Lennon were also going to be on this album?**
You know what was happening? Ringo made an album, or was making an album, Paul was going in the studio and started making an album, but then he decided he didn't want to do it—and I think that was going around, saying that we were all making an album. People thought that it meant we were all making an album together, but we were all making separate ones, although Ringo did play on mine.

**Do you think this album's going to sell?**
I hope so; I don't know. Warner's seemed really happy with it and, so far, the people I've met in interviews all seem to like it. Warner's, I think, are just going to do the best sales thing that they normally do for an album they consider worthy of it. All I can do is my bit and hope they play it on the radio.

**Do you think this 20th anniversary stuff . . .**
I think that might help. It might help a lot, actually, inasmuch as radio stations might be interested, after all that stuff going on, to hear what's happening now. Plus the fact that I've not made an album for a number of years. They do say absence makes the heart grow fonder; I don't know if that's true (laughs).

**Did you go through a period where you were getting kind of bored or bitter? On "Blood From A Clone" (off 1981's Somewhere in England album) . . .**
Yeah, fed up. I love "Blood From A Clone."

**It's a great song, but I can never make out the lyrics after the "oom-pah-pah/Frank Zappa" line.**
"They say you like it, but knowing the market, it may not go well, it's too laid back . . . You need some oom-pah-pah, nothing like Frank Zappa, and not new wave, they don't play that crap . . . Try beating your head on a brick wall, hard like a stone . . . Don't have time for the music, they want blood from a clone."

**"Save The World" (from the same album) is, I think, a very funny song.**
It is, isn't it? I mean, it's serious and funny at the same time.

**Well, with that line in there where you've gotta save the whales.**
Yeah, Greenpeace got their due.

**But "Blood From A Clone," being the first song on the album, just kind of jumped out at you.**
Yeah, 'cause that was all this stuff they were telling me: "Well, we like it, but we don't really hear a single." And then other people were saying, "now, look, radio stations are having all these polls done in the street to find out what constitutes a hit single and they've decided a hit single is a song of love gained or lost directed at 14-to-20-year-olds." And I said, "Shit, what chance does that give me?" So anyway, I went in and wrote that song just to shed some of the frustrations. And there's things in there like "There is no sense to it, pure pounds and pence to it . . . They're so intense, too, makes me amazed."

**What about the line that seems to refer to the Beatles?**
Yeah, I remember the line after it (pauses). Oh! "Where will it all lead us, I thought we had freed us from the mundane, seems I'm wrong again."

**So that was a reference to the Beatles?**
No, just we generally, had freed ourselves from all this bullshit music and all bullshit, period. But I see I'm wrong again.

**Even more so today.**
You said that (laughs).

**Do you think that's true?**
There's a big swatch of rubbish that's very popular and then, within that, there's always been some good stuff. But I don't really listen much anymore; I never have. I've never had time—you're either making your own music or you're out listening to everybody else's. But I catch it when I come through L.A. and I look at MTV (laughs) and it sounds like–I've just done this on an HBO interview and I don't want to step out of line because, basically, I'm quite happy about everything and we all have our rights to be what we want to be. Gandhi said "Create and preserve the image of your choice," so if you want to be Spinal Tap, then best of luck to you. But there's a lot of Spinal Taps out there who obviously didn't see the movie, and whoever he is, there's this big, phantom guitar player with this big guitar who plays the guitar solo on every one of them records.

**But I wonder if I were in the Beatles if I wouldn't feel guilty for . . .**
Having created that? We never created that. Elvis and Chuck Berry and Eddie Cochran never felt guilty about creating Beatles. No, it's OK, it's just that the problem isn't in the music, it's in our consciousness. And it just means that the money-making side of things seems to have its consciousness aimed at a market of 10-to-18-year-olds.

**Don't you think that, in America, it's getting to be a chilling thing?**
I think it's the same all over. It's just that there's more of it in America because it's a bigger country.

**I was watching that movie about the birth of the Beatles, that Dick Clark movie . . .**
Dick Clark? Not him again. I'll tell you, I don't know what Americans think of him, but from the Beatles' point of view, Dick Clark—I don't know what he ever did with his own talent. Y'know, all he does is send you letters: "Can I have a clip of you doing this? Can I have a clip of you doing that? I'm making another movie about you and the history of this and that, and you're in it and I'll give you two dollars if you'll let me have it in." You get to the point of saying, "Fuck off, Dick, think of your own ideas, you're not getting any more of our shit. Just make your own films and rip off other people." Y'know, he's a twat.

**It would appear rock 'n' roll's done more for him than he's done for rock 'n' roll.**
Absolutely. I mean, who is he? And you see these albums coming out with all these great rock 'n' roll hits on them and his face on the sleeve? I'd be embarrassed if I was him. He's sort of a conglomerate unto himself.

Him and Ed Sullivan. Ed Sullivan's been dead about 19 years but he's still out there making Ed Sullivan Productions. "Please, can we have another clip of you doing this? We'll pay you two dollars." You know, piss off.

**Don't you guys have control . . .**
We do. We have control over it, and sometimes you'll get a decent program. The BBC in England put out a program called Rock 'n' roll Years, a weekly thing of 30 minutes, and it was done very tastefully. They take old newsreel footage, some performances–one week it's 1957, then the next week's '58, '59, right through the '60s. They're up into the '70s now, but it's done really neat. You see all the things that happened in a nutshell; it's all compressed . . . lots of historical things and newsreel footage, and there's no commentary on it. There's some talk if it's a newsreel bit—it's just snippets of these things and, in 30 minutes, it gives you a real feel for what happened in that year.

Now that's a nice, intelligent thing, and when they ask "Can we have a clip of you doing such-and-such?" You're inclined to say yes. But when you get all these other people who are just like vultures, who amass video clips of all these other people and sell them around the world, it's greed and it's not artistic. It's just big business. But we get requests all the time; it's non-stop.

**How can you possibly oversee all that?**
That's what Apple is still in the business of; dealing with lawyers and trying to stop people from doing this, doing that and doing the other—or trying to license people to do it properly if they've got the decency to ask.

**What about the "Revolution" commercial?**
Well, that–that's something that is a problem, inasmuch as they, whoever wanted it . . . see, you've

got these people who own copyrights of things. How they obtained them is a different business. Talking personally about the songs I wrote when I was very young, this guy came up to me and said, "Well, you've got to have your music published." I go, "What's that?" "So that when it goes out you can get some money for it. So, here, why don't you sign this form and I'll publish your music for you." They forget to say, "And, incidentally, I'm gonna steal your song and I will own it for the rest of my life, and you don't own that song even though you just wrote it."

I was more fortunate than John and Paul because I only wrote a few songs in the early days, compared to them. Did you ever see the Rutles? Well, there was a thing in there where it says, "Dick Jaws, an out-of-work publisher of no fixed ability, signed them up for the rest of their lives." And it cuts to him saying, "Lucky, really." So that's what happened. Fortunately, when that first agreement expired with me, Neil Aspinall, who was our friend and went to school with Paul and I, and who still runs Apple, said, "Hey, I don't think you should sign with these people." I was in the Himalayas at the time and I thought, OK, and I just formed my own publishing company. So since then I own my own songs, whereas John and Paul's went on, and this guy Dick Jaws sold them to someone else, and then Paul was trying to get 'em back and then Paul's good friend Michael Jackson went and bought them.

So these people who think they own the rights never had anything to do with the promotion of them or the writing of them or the recording of them, but obtained them because of all this devious stuff that happened in the past. (Here Harrison makes what is sometimes termed "a familiar gesture.") That's what happened, so they think they own all our songs. EMI and Capitol thinks they own all our songs on record and, according to contracts, maybe they do. But they have a contract to put out our records and promote our records—they don't have a contract saying "We can sell you to sausage manufacturers." And if we don't do anything about it, every Beatles song in the world is going to be a TV commercial.

**A lot of people, I think, are offended by that.**
They are! Even Time magazine said it took some schmuck five minutes to turn him into a jingle writer.

Through the years, it seems, all this stuff has seeped into society and they tend to look upon it as public domain. It's the same with that Beatlemania stuff—we had to try and stop people from doing these things in order to establish, "Look, we're here, we're humans, we exist, and there's laws of names and likeness." They're doing it all over the place: I see adverts in England now, it's for a bank—Westminster Bank—and they've got a big photograph of James Dean. Even David Putnam, the English film producer—he heads up Columbia Films now, in the States—even he said to his secretary, "Hey, find out who the James Dean lookalike is." It's, like, take a picture of James Dean because he's dead and he can't answer, but there's James Dean's family, his estate—they should own the rights to how he looks. Same with Marilyn Monroe, or whoever, it doesn't matter that they're dead. But they're doing it to us and we're not even dead yet. It's like the Beatles were the most ripped-off people of all time, and, as for the record company, they should be ashamed of themselves–it's one thing to treat some artist who's here today and gone tomorrow with your crummy little royalty rate and treat 'em like trash, but a band like us who survived twenty-some odd years, sold a billion records for them at the lowest royalty rate you've ever heard of, and then still steal from you!? I'd be ashamed, I couldn't do it. And to have to argue and fight with them and say, give us a break, man, you're lucky to have anything. But if this thing with Capitol comes to court they'll be lucky to end up owning the masters. There's a good chance we'll get back all our masters and everything. And the Beatles have never been greedy; we've never received huge royalties like some people now. You know, you get over a dollar fifty, at least, for an album. We get one old penny. One old English penny per album.

**Right now?**
Right now. And even with that, there's hundreds of thousands of albums mysteriously missing that they gave to pension funds run by the Mafia. It's very dirty. So that's what it's all about, that suit against Capitol. It's like, give us a break, we're humans too. We created all this stuff and they were very fortunate to be a part of it inasmuch as distributing our records and making a profit on it.

**It's hard to imagine a band giving more to music than the Beatles did.**
I know. It's disgusting, it's immoral—and if that's how they treat people they're supposed to be in business with, that must be how they treat everybody. It's immoral, that's all there is to it, and ultimately they'll all get it. I don't mean from us, now, but somewhere down the line, in this life or the next life.

**Do you believe in reincarnation?**
Absolutely. And half of those people are going to reincarnate getting one cent out of every CD they sell and sell more records than everybody and not receive any of the money. Be treated like lice.

If you put this in the interview, you can say I'm smiling about it, I'm not letting it depress me. But all this stuff that you read in the papers about Nike and Capitol, that's what's been going on for years. They've all taken advantage of it because after the Beatles split up everybody was sort of not talking to each other, so they all came in, grabbing and plundering as much as they could. But now this is going to be pursued to the end, and even if we all die in the process, our children and our children's children will be after Bhaskar Menon (Chairman and CEO of EMI Music Worldwide) and Capitol until he realizes he's just being a dong.

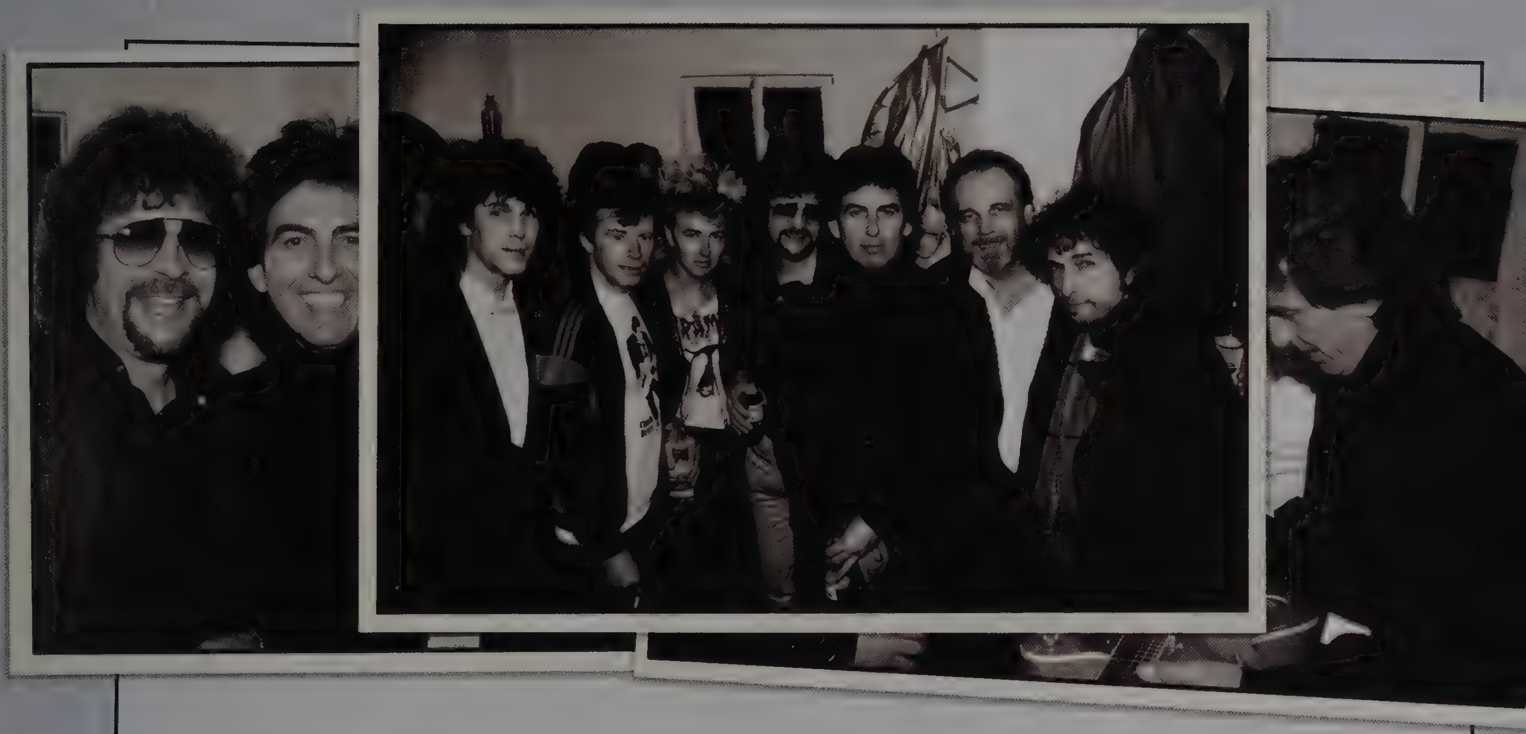
**Do you think you'll win?**
There's no way we can lose. Because if you just put all the cards on the table and see what we've got and what they've got, I think a blind man on a galloping horse would say that Capitol isn't being fair. It's just the balance: the law of nature demands that all things be equal, and this isn't equal.

**Did you ever see that show in London: John, Paul, George, Ringo & Bert?**
I saw it up until the intermission and then—I saw it with my friend Derek Taylor, who's a writer who used to work for Warner Bros. and Apple—I said to him we either have to leave now or I'm gonna jump on that stage and throttle those people. It was awful stuff. All these idiots acting out people—it's like I say in "The Devil's Radio," talking about what they don't know. It's like a rumor. It's like those Beatles cartoons, and it was so inaccurate it was nauseating, having been one.

**How about the screenplay Joe Orton worked up for the Beatles? Was there anything to that?**
There wasn't anything to it. Somebody said—maybe because we had a homosexual manager—he's a good playwright, and phoned him up to see if he could get a screenplay, and that was probably the extent of it. Now, years down the line, there's Prick Up Your Ears, or prick up whatever they really mean.

**Is there anything else that annoys you about your post-Beatles career?**
A lot of the things to do with the Beatles is as if it was a previous life. It's as if it happened in this dream. I don't go around thinking I'm a Beatle or feeling like anything; I tend to live now, here, this day.

**You seem very comfortable with having been a Beatle.**
Well, I've had a lot of years. It was terrible around '69, and in that period: everybody'd seen the movie *Let It Be* and it was really tense and nasty. And the years that followed that were hard because we were all sort of shell-shocked from the '60s. But as things have settled down I've come to terms with it and it's sunk into the past. We've gotten older and new generations have come along—y'know, I spent years avoiding interviews and going on TV to get to a point where I could go out, walk down the street and go in a shop and just do regular little things that ordinary people do. Everything's cool and it's quite enjoyable. And now, if somebody comes up and says, "Alright, George," and



## "TRAVELING WILBURYS CASTING CALL?"

The infamous group photograph was taken backstage at the Palace in Hollywood in February 1987. Dave Edmunds performed that evening and was joined for the encores by former Stray Cat Brian Setzer. From my vantage point during the encores, I noticed George and Jeff in the balcony to stage left. I pointed them out to my partner in crime for that evening, J. Kordosh (the very handsome CREEM editor, who I dragged along to the show; he had recently relocated from our hometown, Detroit). After the show, the record company was having a meet and greet in the theater's restaurant. But upstairs in the dressing room was the *real* meet and greet, in Dave's dressing room. I've done album covers for both the Stray Cats and Dave Edmunds, so they were already good friends. Bob Dylan, I had met and worked with the year before at Farm Aid Concert and the tour that followed with Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers. I had also met Jeff Lynne when he was in ELO. This would be my first encounter with George Harrison, but not my last.

It was a natural for all these guys to show up together. Dave had produced the Stray Cats, as well as George's version of Bob's song, "I Don't Want To Do It" for the *Porky's Revenge* soundtrack. Jeff had worked with Dave, producing a number of tracks for him, including his hit "Slipping Away." George and Jeff had worked with Duane Eddy for his upcoming album. George had also recorded recently with Bob.

Dave had to run off to the record company get together, and left us to our own vices. That would be Cuervo and Coronas. I assimilated in my usual fashion, I bought a couple rounds of drinks, while waiting for Dave's return and found my opportunity for a photo. Everyone was ordering Coronas and I asked for a couple of shots for the Cats, Jeff and myself, George overheard and ordered in as well, claiming that he hadn't had tequila before!? This being Dave's show, I was covering the concert for CREEM. He was the man they all had come to see, so we waited. I took a few photos of George and Jeff, had a couple laughs and discussed the new album they were working on together.

I asked George about doing an interview for the magazine when the album came out, and he replied "I suppose we should." I gave him my number. Kordosh on the other hand, was off in a corner somewhere, discussing *Blonde on Blonde* with Dylan. Later that evening I tried to convince John that *Self Portrait* was indeed Bob's best work, but I digress.

Dave had returned, and I imposed on George by asking for assistance with setting up a group photo. "Don't you think this would make a great band with all these guitar players?" I coerced. George leaned on my shoulder and organized the photo by placing everyone in position, before backing into the pose himself, agreeing he laughed, "You're right, this would make a lovely band, not a bad idea, with all these guys". A few photos went by, and I began to wonder who the bearded gentleman between George and Bob might be. For just a moment, I considered asking him to move out of the photo. These all being famous guitar players. Well, he must be someone, since George wanted to stand next to him, I thought. When I noticed that Slim Jim had snuck into the photo next to Dave, I gave up the notion. I found out shortly after that it was Duane Eddy, the legendary guitar player who influenced most of these guys to begin with. That was it, another shot please.

A few months later, I came home one afternoon, checked my answering machine, "This is George . . . I promised to call . . . So, I will give your number to Bob Merlis, if that's okay."

John Kordosh, Bill Holdship and I spent a fabulous afternoon chatting with George and taking photos. The tape from the answering machine is long since worn out. "This is George . . . this is George . . . this is George . . ."

*—Robert Matheu*

# CREEM

they just congratulate you and thank you for all the music you did in the past and what you've been doing–that's nice. It's the concentrated mania that would make anybody go crazy. It had its low point around the end of the '60s and it did have a hangover period into the '70s, but I'm cool now.

**That the Beatles went out with such class without going crazy, doing stuff like "You Know My Name . . ."**
Yeah! We always had a sense of humor. When we were left alone, the four Beatles, we had fun and we had a good sense of humor. We took the ups and the downs together and, I think because we had each other, we helped each other from going crazy or having nervous breakdowns. Unlike poor old Elvis, who, although he had 59 friends with him, was not the same. He was the only one who experienced what it was like being Elvis, whereas four of us experienced what it was like being fab.

**Is it true that you guys visited Elvis at Graceland?**
Not Graceland, no. We visited him when he had a house in Bel Air in about 1965; we went over to his house and spent the evening with him.

**Did you jam?**
No. When we arrived at his house, he was sitting on a couch, watching TV, playing a Fender bass. And it was set up pretty good, 'cause it would be a difficult thing—the Beatles meeting Elvis—but it was set up nicely. He had a few of his mates around, and we had our roadies and our manager, and Colonel Tom was there, and the drinks and the pool table . . . it was just like wandering around, saying "Hello, how are you doing?," having a drink. He was really nice and he was charming, and it was a big thrill for us, meeting him—especially because . . . well, we looked forward to it, but it was probably up on Mullholland Drive, which goes around and around and around, and we were in the dark, in the back of this limo. We used to smoke these herbal cigarettes in those days, and we had a couple of those and we had the giggles, going into hysterics, and then we totally forgot where we were going or what we were doing. And suddenly, we pulled up at this big gate and we said, "What is it? Where are we? What's going on?" And then somebody said, "It's Elvis!" "We've come to see Elvis!" Somebody opened the door and we all fell out of this limo, just like the Rutles, all giggling, and we ran in the house and there was Elvis sitting there playing this bass.

**There've been rumors that you guys jammed together—I guess it was just a rumor.**
I think so. But I can't tell you. I've had a lot of brain fades since that period; I dunno, maybe Paul or Ringo would remember. But it was a good night, and certainly a great thrill and an honor to meet him. I met him later at Madison Square Garden—it must have been in 1972, something like that. And at that time, I had my uniform; the worn-out denim jacket and jeans—looked like a rag-man—and I had a big beard and moustache, and long hair down to my waist. They took me back in the intermission to meet Elvis again and he was in the back of the dressing room—the big rooms with the showers for the footballers and stuff—and I was in the front part just talking to some of the guys. And I'm sitting there, thinking "Well, where's Elvis, then?" And finally he came out of the back and he was . . . immaculate. I felt like this real grubby little slug and he looked like Lord Siva or something. He seemed to be about eight feet tall and his hair was black and his tan was perfect and he had this big white suit, a gold belt about four feet wide and he was towering above me and I just put a hand out (cowers) and said "Hello, Elvis, how are you?"—just cowering like this little rag-man. I wanted to say to him, "Why don't you just come out in your jeans and your black shirt—get rid of all them horrible women singers in your band, all them horrible trumpet players and just have James Burton and the drummer and the bass player and the piano player? Just come out and do 'That's All Right, Mama.'" But instead he came out and did (sings) "I did it myyy wayyyy." Oh, Jesus. But we all loved Elvis and it was sad to see what happened to him. We still love him and he's still there in his spirit and in his music and best of luck to him, that's what I say.

**What do you think happens to people after they die?**
Well, what do you think happens to people when they go home and they take their suit off? That's what I think—your body falls off, but you've still got two other bodies, fortunately. This is how I see it; this thing they call the soul. In the Bible, I think Jesus said there are three cages for the Bird of Paradise. And the Bird of Paradise is this soul, this perfect thing that has its own identity, and then the three cages are these three bodies. One body is called the causal body, the next body is called the astral body and the third is called the gross physical body. So death is only relative to birth—if you don't wanna die, you don't get born. But as long as you're born, you've got to die, because just as sure as nighttime is gonna follow daytime, death is gonna follow birth. Like bob Dylan said, "Look out kid, it's something you did. God knows when, but you're doing it again." So what happens is your body falls off. Gets tired or for whatever reason, and you're now in your astral body, which is much more subtle and is made of light. Then, just like on your radio, where you can change the frequency without turning the dial, there's a whole 'nother thing happening there. And that's what it's like: all these different levels are all right here, but they're all vibrating on different frequencies. So death is just where your suit falls off and now you're in your other suit. But you can't see it on this level, so it's all right. Don't worry.

**Did you start writing "All Those Years Ago" before John was killed?**
Yeah, I did.

**The lyric—where you jump from Lennon being "weird" to God and the reason we exist—always puzzled me.**
It is a strange choice of words. The way I saw it was, I'm talking all about God and he's the only reason we exist—now that's something I believe to be true.

**Were you saying you were weirder than John?**
No, no, no. What I was saying is there's all these weird people who don't actually believe in God and who go around murdering everybody, and yet, in the broad sweep, it's like they were the ones pointing fingers at Lennon, saying he's a weirdo. Sometimes my lyrics get a bit abstract in place—I get so many thoughts coming from different angles, I'm not sure if they come across right. But I think that's what I was trying to say.

**You also told me you played bass on "Old Brown Shoe."**
It's like a lunatic playing.

**It sounds like McCartney was going nuts again.**
That was me going nuts. I'm doing exactly what I do on the guitar.

**Did you play bass on "For You Blue," too?**
I don't even remember that song. No, wait a minute—"For You Blue" was Paul, Paul was on that. Unless you're talking about the live version which nobody's heard, but that's Willie Weeks.

**Are you going to tour?**
Oh, I hope not (laughs). No, I wouldn't mind doing a few shows here and there, but people keep asking me this, and the only way I can see it is to even to do one concert is so much work: to get a band, rehearse them, not just the band, the lighting and the sound . . . these days, you can't just go out like the Beatles did, where we had a little amp each and a microphone. You have to get such an entourage together and work so much that it's hardly worth doing all that to just do one or two shows. And then it means you're gonna tour for six months, and I don't know if I can last six months on the road.

**Are you a good friend of Dylan's? Do you guys hang out?**
I don't know how good a friend I am; he's my good friend, but I don't know how good I am to him. But I love him, I really do, and I think he's funny . . .

**You're funny, too—and that's funny, 'cause for all those years you were thought of as being so serious . . .**
'Cause I did them religious songs three or four times.

**It seems like it would be hard to be Bob Dylan or Elvis—being just one guy.**
I heard a funny story from somebody who once

toured with Bob. He said, "Well, it took four of them, it only took one of me." But that's true, too—just imagine four Bob Dylans? That'd be tough? I'm sure we've all enjoyed and influenced each other. I don't want to embarrass him because I'd like to meet him again someday, but he's special. And there's not a lot of people I'd say that about.

**How'd you get along with Sean and Madonna during Shanghai Surprise?**
Oh, yeah, they're great, they were really helpful on that movie (laughs).

No, I like Sean, if you're seriously asking me about Sean. I know he's a naughty boy and I know he didn't try as hard as he could've to make that film better. I think that when he's in a good mood you see his performances are really good: there's a lot of scenes in it where he's excellent. And a lot of scenes where you can see he's pissed off. He may have had a lot of reasons to be pissed off, but we all do—we have to perform, that's what professionalism is. So it was disappointing because—I think she was trying to be a little bit nice, but she doesn't have a sense of humor, which is unfortunate. "Cause it was a comedy. And, Sean, I spent a lot of time with him and I really liked him a lot—I had some really good laughs with him. When he's up, he's a sweetheart, he's a good actor and he's a very nice person. When he gets out of the pen, I just wish him well and I hope he'll be able to keep cool.

**It always seemed ironic that you had to go do that press conference for them—hell, nobody had their picture taken more than the Beatles.**
The thing is, you see, people get famous for a bit and this is why the Beatles were good. We had the four of us—if one of us would start getting snooty or big'eaded we'd just broadside him. We weren't having any of that and we always kept our sense of humor, and if one of us was a bit depressed, there'd always be someone there to jolly them and bring them out a bit. Then you get these other people who get famous and they suddenly start thinking they're God's gift to mankind, when really all they are is silly pop stars. There's much more to life than just being a famous pop star. Unfortunately, a lot of them fall into the trap. They get surrounded by people saying how great they are, all these sycophants who surround them. And unfortunately, she has got all that going and she's fallen for it. But I think she has the ability to be a really nice person—you have to see it from the other side, which I can see too, which is that the pressure you're under when you are fab is tremendous. It sometimes does get you crazy when you can't write and can't do this when everybody's bugging you and shooting cameras in your face. So I sympathize from that point of view, too. But what she needs is just 500 milligrams of LSD (laughs).

**Don't you ever feel guilty about being the one who turned the Beatles on to LSD?**
It wasn't really me. Let me tell you what happened: I had a dentist who invited me and John and our ex-wives to dinner, and he had this acid he'd got off the guy who ran Playboy in London. And the Playboy guy had gotten it off, you know, the people who had it in America. What's his name, Tim Leary. And this guy had never had it himself, didn't know anything about it, but he thought it was an aphrodisiac and he had this girlfriend with huge breasts. He invited us down there with our blonde wives and I think he thought he was gonna have a scene. And he put it in our coffee without telling us—he didn't take any himself. We didn't know we had it, and we'd made an arrangement earlier—after we had dinner we were gonna go to this nightclub to see some friends of ours who were playing in a band. And I was saying, "OK, let's go, we've got to go," and this guy kept saying, "No, don't go, finish your coffee. Then, 20 minutes later or something, I'm saying, "C'mon John, we'd better go now. We're gonna miss the show." And he says we shouldn't go 'cause we've had LSD. I'd heard about LSD, but it was before all the panic, everybody saying heaven and hell and all this stuff. So, fortunately, I didn't care. And I could sense there was something weird going on. Then he said, "Well, OK then, we'll come with you—I'll drive you there, leave your car here." And I said, "No, no wait a minute. I'm taking my car." We went and he followed.

So we got to this place and we just sat down and I think ordered a drink and then suddenly something happened. I just got this overwhelming feeling, I couldn't put my finger on why it was happening, but it was just like I was so in love with everything. I just felt so great I wanted to hug everybody and tell 'em how much I loved them. And then suddenly the room started moving a bit and stuff like that, and the next thing I remember it was like World War III was happening. Bombs were dropping, all kinds of things, and I finally gathered my senses together and realized the club had closed. They'd put all the lights on and the waiters were going around putting all the chairs on top of the tables and sweeping the floors. We somehow got out of there and walked to this next club—the Ad Lib Club—it just went on forever. So John and I had it together. We'd heard of it, but we never knew what it was about and it was put in our coffee maliciously. So it really wasn't us turning each other or the world or anything—we were the victims of silly people.

**How many times did you take LSD?**
Well, after that time, John and I started thinking, "Hey, how the heck are we gonna tell the others?" 'Cause, you know, there's no way back after that. It's like you can never return to being who you were before, thankfully. I think if you come out of it in one piece, then—well, it's individual reactions—but what I gained was certainly worth the hardship it put me through. It scrambled my brain for a year—it seems like years, but you know how it stretches time. It was actually a few months of trying to piece it back together: what do I do now, what do we do now, who am I, what is all this?

Then we thought—since there's no way you can describe it–how are we ever gonna tell Paul and Ringo and the rest of our direct entourage? We've got to get some more and give it to'em. So we got some more in New York, when we were on tour, and we got to Los Angeles, and we said, "OK lads (laughs), you're gonna have to have this thing." And one of them had to stay straight. Mal stayed straight and Neil and Ringo had it with us, but Paul didn't wanna know. And then there was Jim McGuinn and David Crosby—that was our second time. There was also this guy, what's him name?—Peter Fonda—who suddenly showed up. I don't think he was on it, but he should've been. Anyway, the third time I did it with a guy in England, and I thought "Ooh, I can't do this anymore, this is too much." I had a slight fear of it, as well. Then I was into India and meditating and all that, and after that I realized so many things, and one of the things I'd heard about was fear. They said, "Look fear in the face and it won't bother you anymore." So I thought, well, I really do have a bit of a fear left over from this acid stuff, and I can't go through the rest of my life fearing it, so I'd better take it again (laughs). So I just took it and in that period of time—1967—we just seemed to be taking it all year, down at John's house, 'round at Ringo's house, and I got to the point were I could drive this Ferrari around Hyde Park in peak hour traffic on acid and it wasn't working anymore. All it did was give me a pain in the neck. I looked at some under a microscope and it looked like all this old rope. I thought, well, I'm not putting that in my brain anymore, and I just packed it in. The good stuff—the carpet flying up in the room and the chairs getting bigger and smaller, all that Roman Polanski movie stuff–stopped happening after I started to understand more about relativity and time and space. The fun had gone out of it, so I stopped doing it. I can't imagine, if I hadn't had it, how many years of normal life it would have taken to get me to the realizations: I might've never got them in this life. It just opened the door and I experienced really good things. I mean, I never doubted God after that. Before, I was a cynic. I didn't even say the word God; I thought "bullshit to all that stuff." But after that, I knew. It was not even a question of "Is there possibly a God?"—I knew absolutely. It's just that big light that goes off in your head. ■

# CREEM'S PROFILES

(Pronounced "Boy Howdy!")

ROBERT MATHEU

# WAS (NOT WAS)

**HOME:** The Woodwork.

**AGE:** Old enough to remember the acid revolution!

**PROFESSION:** Musical Freaks.

**HOBBIES:** Making a cult figure out of Sweet Pea Atkinson, hangin' out with Mitch Ryder, Doug Fieger, Ozzy Osbourne, Marshall Crenshaw, Wayne Kramer and Mel Torme (whew!), laughing at tornadoes, making Detroit rock-relevant again.

**LAST BOOK READ:** *The Doors Of Perception* by Aldous Huxley.

**QUOTE:** "You can't talk Shakespeare with a monkey."

**PROFILE:** Old high school pals from the suburbs, Don and David St. Was had a dream—a weird concept—that they put into action with an LP of strange funk music which has evolved into an LP of hodge-podge pop music with the strangest assortment of characters this side of *The Masked Maurauders*. Woodwork squeaks and *out come the freaks . . . !*

**BEER:** Boy Howdy!

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# Johnny Cash

## A Little Farther . . . Down the Line

BY J. KORDOSH · JUNE 1988 · PHOTO BY ROBERT MATHEU

Onstage, Johnny Cash likes to joke about his daughter Rosanne's recording of "Tennessee Flat Top Box": "She played it for me and I said, 'That's real pretty, honey. And I want to thank you for recording it.' And she said 'Why?' And I said, 'Because I wrote it.'"

It gets a big laugh, but Cash isn't joking.

"No, she didn't know I wrote it," he says. "She sure didn't but that's alright. I've made her listen to a lot of my old songs since then."

There's plenty to listen to: since starting out on Sam Phillip's legendary Sun label with "Cry! Cry! Cry!" 33 years ago Cash has recorded something like 1,500 songs. He's played with everybody from Elvis Presley to Elvis Costello. He once hosted the country's top-rated TV show. And he's still out there on the road, sometimes with his wife, June Carter Cash and the Carter Family, most recently on a college junket with longtime friend Waylon Jennings, backed by Jessi Colter and June. Although the familiar jet-black mane has silvered some and the craggy face is perhaps more wrinkled, Johnny Cash is still a little bigger than life, especially onstage, where he sounds like . . . well, like Johnny Cash. Nobody's ever sounded quite like him.

Cash's story is quintessentially American: after finishing high school in Dyess, Arkansas, he went into the Air Force for four years, spending much of his time intercepting Russian air-to-ground transmissions. (He also had a black friend in the service who was inordinately fond of wearing blue suede shoes; more on that later.) "In the meantime, I was learning to play guitar," Cash says. "I couldn't afford a guitar as a kid; I never had one. My mother had one when I was very small, but it was very cheap and it didn't last. My dad was a cotton farmer. We didn't have but 20 acres of land; we were very poor. We farmed with mules–I plowed with mules when I was a boy, and picked cotton by hand. Every afternoon after school I'd go directly to the fields and pick cotton till after dark. So I grew up on the cotton farm and music is what carried me through it all. That radio and the stations that I listened to: the Memphis stations, and Chicago, and WJJD and WLW-New Orleans, XEJ-Ft. Worth, the Mexican stations that played country music."

When Cash was 12, a hillbilly show–Smilin' Eddie Hill and the Louvin Brothers–came to town. "I walked two-and-a-half miles to go to the show and I stood out by the car in the dark and watched them load up their instruments afterwards. I wanted an autograph really bad but I was too embarrassed to get it." When he was 14, he went to Memphis to see their show again–"and, from that moment on, I knew that was what I wanted to do."

And he returned to Memphis to do it, finding himself in some interesting company at Sun Records: Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis and Elvis. Together they made up Sun's million-dollar quartet, back in the limelight these days since Charly Records released the longer version of their storied session. Only thing is, some people don't think Cash is on the record.

"People don't think I am, but I am," he says. "See, it was a Carl Perkins session–Carl asked me to come and I was the first of the four to show up. I sat and listened to Carl, watched him record. Elvis came in and Carl stopped the session and Elvis sat down at the piano. Elvis had recorded 'Blue Moon Of Kentucky' and I started challenging him to sing Bill Monroe songs and Louvin Brothers songs. When I was a kid, before my voice dropped, I'd sing the real high part–I'd sing tenor. And I was singing those high parts on the Bill Monroe songs and Louvin Brothers songs on the quartet. And there are a lot more of them that are not on the album. You don't hear my voice–I hear it myself when I've listened to it a couple times, but I don't sound like Johnny Cash, 'cause I'm not singing the low part. Elvis was singing the bass and I was singing really high, but I was so far away from the mike that you hardly ever hear me. But I was there for the whole thing."

In fact, Cash and Elvis had a lot in common; they not only shared a record label, they had the same manager (Bob Neal, in Elvis's pre-Colonel Tom days) and often played on the same bill. Shortly after the release of "Cry! Cry! Cry!" Elvis hired Cash to open for him, paying him $75 for his first show. Johnny went on to open throughout Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas. "I've never been on a show with Elvis that every person backstage wasn't standing in the aisles watching every move he made," Cash reminisces. And, later on, Elvis asked Cash to write him a song

"'Blue Suede Shoes' was my idea," Cash explains, relating the tale of his Air Force friend. "We was doing a show in Amory, Mississippi, and Carl (Perkins) said 'I need a hit record bad.'" Cash told Perkins the blue suede shoe story and even threw in the song's intro, but turned down co-writing credits

"Elvis had 'Blue Suede Shoes' and he knew I had something to do with writing it," says Cash. "He asked me to write him a song, so I wrote 'Get Rhythm' and I went down and told Sam I had this song for Elvis and I'd like to put it down." Cash and Luther Perkins and Marshall Grant–the Tennessee Two of his early years–did record the song. "Then Sam said, 'Well, I have some news for you–Elvis is now with RCA-Victor and he can't have that song.' And I said, 'But I wrote it for him, he asked me to.' Sam said, 'No, I wanna release it by you; that's a hit.' As it happened, it was the other side of 'I Walk The Line' and it didn't get much play."

As it also happened, Cash wasn't long for Sun, either: he was soon signed to Columbia, where he went on to be known primarily as a country artist. "Y'know, Elvis and I both begged Sam Phillips to let us record gospel music," Cash explains. "That's where we were both comin' from. I asked Sam to let us record 'Strange Things Happening Every Day' and 'Then It Rained' and 'Don't Take Everybody To Be Your Friend'–the black gospel things of Sister Rosetta (Tharpe)–and Sam said, 'I can't sell gospel music, I gotta sell secular records.' He said we can't afford to spend our money trying to promote 'em. I said alright, but I told Sam I'd go to a company that'd let me do it. And my contract was about to run out with Sun and I decided to go with Columbia 'cause they promised me I could record anything I wanted."

Cash's increasing country acceptance led him to Nashville and the Grand Ole Pry–where he'd been earlier. Elvis had been there, too. "They wanted me on the Grand Ole Opry," he recalls. "The *people* did, but the manager of the Opry didn't. I went in to see him and 'Folsom Prison Blues' was in the Top Five–my agent took me up there and I had on a black shirt and pants and sideburns down to here and my hair was slicked, you know how we wore it then. He kept me waiting for about two hours sitting in that office. Finally he motioned for me to come in–he's sitting back there with a cee-gar, leaning back in his chair–and he looked at me, looked *through* me. He said, 'And what makes you think you belong in the Grand Ole Opry?' I called on that inner strength and peace and finally I said, 'Well, I got a record that's in the top sellers charts in *Billboard* and I think the fans would like to hear my sing it.' He looked at me for a minute and said, 'Dressed like you are?' I said, 'Well, this is what I wear.' At the time, they were wearing rhinestones and spangles and cowboy hats and shiny boots and all that on the Grand Ole Opry–some of them still are–but I said this is what I wear. He said, 'What you wanna dress like Elvis for?' And I said, 'I'm not dressin' like Elvis; I don't know what Elvis is wearin', I'm wearin' what is right for me.' He said, 'All you Memphis rockabillies look alike.'" Cash did play the Opry, doing "Folsom Prison Blues" and "Hey Porter" *–and* nine encores. It was also the last time Elvis Presley played the Grand Ole Opry.

"They wouldn't let him take drums onstage and they said some very unkind things about him. I remember one singer–and I won't give his name because he's dead now–Elvis walked by, and I started talking to him because he didn't know anybody there. I mean, there were some people he idolized: the Louvin Brothers, Bill Monroe, he *idolized* some of these people. But this one country singer walked by and said 'goddamn nigger singer' and kept walkin'. I turned to Elvis and looked and the tears were runnin' off his chin. He dropped his head and said, 'I gotta go.' I waked him to the door and said, 'Where you going'?' He said, I've gotta get out of here and I'll never be back.'"

Cash, though, returned to the Opry in 1958–"By then, I was Johnny Cash, country star," he laughs–but bolted when he was unwilling to play 26 Saturday nights yearly, a demand of the Opry. He moved to California, where he lived for seven years. Towards the end of the '60s, his star was ascending again, culminating with his multi-platinum *At Folsom Prison* and *At San Quentin* live albums and his ABC-TV variety show, one of the greatest American media offerings ever: although an established country star, Cash regularly brought musicians from other genres–particularly rock 'n' roll–onto the show.

"ABC had a big meeting; they wanted to sign me up for a year," Cash recalls. "So I said, I gotta be who I am and I've gotta work with people I feel comfortable around, people I can relate to. And I'm not going to go Hollywood on you–I'm not going to use Hollywood people unless they can sing a good country song. They said, 'Who do you want for your guests?,' and I thought I'd check 'em out. I said–the first name I gave 'em was Pete Seeger (*laughs*). Said 'I want Pete Seeger–he's a good American folk singer and writer and I wanna work with him.' So, reluctantly, they said OK, and they asked who else. I said Bob Dylan. They said, 'You can't get him. Bob Dylan won't do TV.' I said, well I'll ask, and they put him on the list. And I started naming all these people I wanted to work with: I said Rambling Jack Elliot, and they said, 'Who's that?' I said, 'a guy I want to sing with.'"

Whatever it was, *The Johnny Cash Show* probably wasn't what the execs had conceived. The show featured the Who, Joni Mitchell, Kenny Rogers and The First Edition, Neil Young, Linda Ronstadt, James Taylor and Ray Charles, among others. Even Bob Dylan, who–it turned out–*would* do TV under the right conditions.

"Our relationship started through the mail," Cash recalls. "I got a letter from Bob Dylan–it was a long rambling letter and he said something like. 'Man, when I was growing up there was Johnny Cash and Hank Williams, that's all. He's gone, but I wanna meet you.'" The two exchanged a few more letters before meeting at the Newport Folk Festival. From there, Dylan invited Cash to his home in Woodstock, where they jammed all night long. Dylan's *Nashville Skyline* album soon followed.

"He stayed at my house, he and Sara and the kids," says Cash. "But he was scared to death of television. I said, 'You don't have to do it but I would really like to have you on the show.' So (*laughs*) it was kind of funny–they had the craziest, ugliest set for him–it was a shack, it looked like a country shack that they let down with wires behind him. And when they put that set out there he said, 'Am I gonna have to stand in front of that?' I said 'Not if you don't want to.' So I made them take the set away and asked him what he wanted and he said 'Nothing–just black.' So that's they way we did it." Cash pauses, reflecting. "I think his appearance on my show may still be an embarrassment to him."

Not so the *Nashville Skyline* album, though. "He had a lot of fun doing that," Cash agrees. Oddly, Cash got a Grammy for the LP–more specifically, for the LP's liner notes. "The fact that it was a Bob Dylan album had a lot to do with it, I think," he dryly notes. The two haven't hung out much since their celebrated collaboration on "Girl From The North Country": "I think Bob equated me with televangelism," says Cash. "He was wrong about that, but I had that feeling. I saw him backstage at the Grammys in Hollywood and he said something to me about the television evangelists and I didn't quite understand what he was trying to say. Him being smart, y'know–I think he was trying to strike up a conversation, but there were a lot of people around and we couldn't really talk. He's really very shy and very hard to get into a conversation."

When asked whether he lost credibility with the "country people" during that period–a period when Cash was doing overtly sociological songs like "The Man In Black" and What Is Truth," he answers, "I hope so! I hope I did. I don't care, I was doing what I wanted to do." In fact, both songs where written for a campus special when ABC was "really grasping at straws, really trying to figure out how to keep Johnny Cash's ratings up." Although Cash claims he was writing a lot of crap during that time, both hold up surprisingly well, even though "every line to 'The Man In Black' was an answer to a question a reporter had asked me about something." The pragmatic reason advocated by June Carter Cash–that black clothes show less dirt and wrinkles when on the road–wasn't widely discussed.

* * *

Johnny Cash in 1988: now 56 years old, Cash has weathered any number of bouts, including a drying-out period at the Betty Ford clinic four years ago. He's a devout Christian–his fictional account of St. Paul's life, *The Man In White*, is distributed by his good friend Billy Graham. And Cash still doesn't lack for musical collaborators. The first song he recorded for his PolyGram debut album, *Johnny Cash Is Coming To Town*, was Elvis Costello's "The Big Light."

"I got this *King Of America* album in advance from a disc jockey in Ohio who knew Elvis," says Cash. "He'd underlined 'The Big Light' and said this song is for you." When Cash played with the Carter Family in London recently, Costello was in the audience with Nick Lowe, and Declan joined him for a live version of "Big Light," while Lowe came in on "Get Rhythm." Cash's life has been like that: this past Christmas, he worked up a song with Tom T. Hall and Paul McCartney in Jamaica.

"It's really weird, but of all the people I've sat and swapped songs with in my entire life, I've swapped songs more hours with Paul McCartney than with anybody," he muses. "This past Christmas, we sang till about one a.m. under a full moon, sitting on the front porch, doing a song called 'Moon Over Jamaica.' When we left, he insisted that we stay with them when we come to England or Scotland and he said he'd love to record with me. I said, 'You've got to be kidding' you don't record with people like me.' And he said, 'Yeah, I do. You're the first person I've ever asked to record with me.' I said 'You've recorded with Carl Perkins and all them other people,' and he said, 'Yeah, but they asked me. I'm asking you.'"

Despite this–despite his enormous contribution to popular music–Cash is clear-eyed, if a bit negative about what's going on. "Let's be realistic," he says. "Look who sells records: Springsteen and Mellencamp, they sell records. I don't sell records, not compared to what they do." He says his favorite Springsteen album, by far, is *Nebraska*, and that his music hasn't had any impact on Mellencamp at all, as best as he can tell. He's recorded two of Springsteen's songs: "Johnny 99" and "Highway Patrolman" and says this: "*Born In The U.S.A.* was alright, but that *Nebraska* album, when he really gets down to it, gets down to earth and puts his heart into it, that's where he's at for me."

So where does Johnny Cash fit in nowadays?

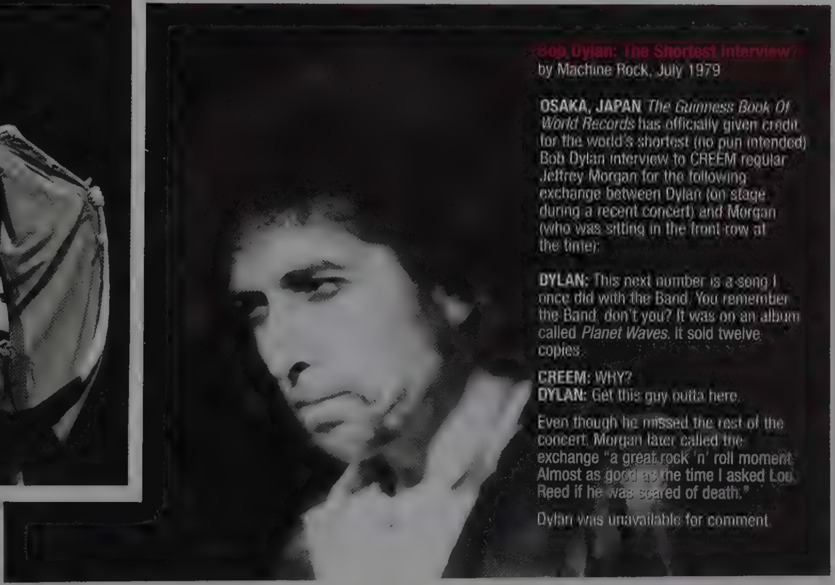
"Well, you've got the record companies and media hype and they're all hyping the young people," Johnny says. "I dunno, maybe my day of recognition will come around, I don't know. I really don't know how much impact my music has had on anybody. Really.

"Y'know what I did? I went and bought two Ry Cooder albums, 'cause Ry Cooder recorded 'Get Rhythm' and 'Hey Porter.' And I love the way these people do my sounds. I listen to that and I say, "Damn, I wish I'd've done it that way.'"

Not me. ■

ROBERT MATHEU (BOTH)

*What all teenage boys in Miami are wearing this year.*



**Bob Dylan: The Shortest Interview?**
by Machine Rock, July 1979

**OSAKA, JAPAN** *The Guinness Book Of World Records* has officially given credit for the world's shortest (no pun intended) Bob Dylan interview to CREEM regular Jeffrey Morgan for the following exchange between Dylan (on stage during a recent concert) and Morgan (who was sitting in the front row at the time):

**DYLAN:** This next number is a song I once did with the Band. You remember the Band, don't you? It was on an album called *Planet Waves*. It sold twelve copies.

**CREEM:** WHY?
**DYLAN:** Get this guy outta here.

Even though he missed the rest of the concert, Morgan later called the exchange "a great rock 'n' roll moment. Almost as good as the time I asked Lou Reed if he was scared of death."

Dylan was unavailable for comment.

EVERYTHING

# fIREHOSE

## If'n You Don't Know By Now

BY STEVE PETERS * JULY 1989 * PHOTO BY GREG ALLEN

To an out-of-towner, San Pedro would probably seem like one of the least likely places in California to spawn a seminal punk rock band. Situated 10 miles south of Los Angeles proper, this quiet region was known locally for years as the site of L.A. County's biggest harbor, as well as being one of the major departure points for nearby Catalina Island.

Then, in 1980, a couple of self-acknowledged "nerd dudes" named D. Boon and Mike Watt formed a band with surfer/drummer George Hurley. With Watt playing bass and Boon on guitar and vocals, the trio clumsily scratched out raw, original tunes that were the antithesis of the cover band mentality of other local groups. When their debut EP, *Paranoid Time*, was released on fledgling indie label SST that year, San Pedro started getting newfound recognition—as the home of the Minutemen.

"We always said Pedro (in our songs) because it's funny that we were even playing here," says Watt, a Virginia-born Navy brat who moved into the area when he was nine. "It isn't like this was a fertile breeding ground for bands or something. The only gigs we could get were opening for Black Flag. Greg Ginn (Black Flag guitarist and co-founder of SST) saw our second gig and signed us. We were the second SST band! It was insane. We never thought you could do that, you know, make your own records. That really blew our minds."

Over the next five years, the Minutemen's quirky mix of rock, folk, funk and jazz—initially delivered in 30 to 60 second blasts of noise that reflected the band's name—stretched the self-destructive limitations of punk rock and helped establish a healthy alternative scene in L.A. But just as the perennial acclaim the group had been receiving was beginning to translate into moderate commercial success with the release of *Three Way Tie For Last* in 1985, D. Boon was killed in an auto accident in the Arizona desert, bringing the Minutemen legacy to an abrupt and shocking end. For Watt, who had been best friends with Boon since before the two first picked up their instruments at 13, the loss was devastating. He couldn't bring himself to attend the guitarist's funeral and didn't play the bass for months.

"I didn't even want to make music," the usually animated Watt says solemnly. "Fuck that shit. I didn't want to be a part—I wouldn't carry D. Boon's casket. I wouldn't put him in the ground. He was too strong a man. I didn't want to put him to rest."

Around the same time, a 21-year-old busboy from Columbus named Ed Crawford was discovering the off-center grooves of *Three Way Tie* and kicking around the idea of forming a band of his own. A classically trained trumpet player who had been noodling on acoustic guitar since he was 12, Crawford was a big Minutemen fan and had bought an electric guitar just a few weeks before he learned of D. Boon's death.

"First time I saw the Minutemen was in this little club called Stache's," Ed remembers. "The place was just about packed. I didn't know what to expect—I'd heard one tape of theirs and I was just totally into it."

The Stache's show turne out to be a typical Minutemen blow-out, with Hurley and Watt (the only bassist I've ver seen who breaks strings when he plays) holding down the bottom end while the portly Boon—an unlikely frontman if ever there was one—took complete command of the stage, frantically bounding off the floor and spewing his sharply worded anti-war diatribes and tales of life in Pedro. "Rarely have I been so moved by a live show," Ed smiles. "I got up on top of this damn bar railing, because I wanted to *see* this. To watch D. Boon up there like that . . . I thought, 'Man, if he can do that, I can do that.' They really inspired me to think about rock 'n' roll in realistic terms."

A few months later, a member of Camper Van Beethoven, another California-based group, erroneously told Ed that Hurley and Watt were auditioning new guitar players. Watt had since lent his talents to a couple of projects, largely due to the coaxing of former Black Flag bassist Kira Roessler, with whom he recorded an LP of double-barreled bass attacks under the moniker of Dos. But a couple of informal jams with Hurley and ex-Saccharine trust guitarist Joe Baiza had failed to generate the necessary spark, and when a friend of Ed's convinced him to give Watt a call, Watt was more interested in recording a Madonna cover than forming another band.

"I was just getting people to laugh again with me," Watt says of that period. "It was a bad time. My big, bold thing was to make a Madonna single, man! To me, that was going out on a limb. Everything else beyond that didn't matter."

Ed takes up the story: "I called him up and he said, 'Well, you know, Mike's not playing, but send me a tape.' And I said, 'Well, I know somebody I can stay with. I'll be out there the first plane I can get.'"

Within a week, Crawford had arrived in Southern California and was lelaving countless messages on Watt's answering machine. "One day he got sick of listening to them, I think, and he called me back. By this time, I had been out there for about two weeks, and I was all out of money and I had to go back home. I called up and said, 'Hi Mike, gotta go back home!' And he called me the next day and said 'Well, come on down and we'll play some songs.'"

If Watt had any misgivings about inviting Crawford over, they were confirmed when he arrived home from his pool cleaning job for their first meeting. "My neighbor was across the hall," he remembers with a smile, "and Ed went there. I was coming back from the pools and I see him, and the kid's got bleached hair—"

"Bubblegum yellow," Hurley interrupts, his own long shock of blond hair tucked underneath a British racing cap. "It was horrible. I used to have the same color!"

"I was like, 'Oh my fucking God,'" Watt grows semi-serious. "I didn't know what to think, 'cause this guy knew me." He addresses Ed. "See, you picked me, you *knew* me, but I didn't know you, and it was like 'Oh shit.'

"So I get the guitar, put him through the four-track, 'cause he didn't have an amp. We start playing these songs, and I could tell that he never played electric guitar!"

Despite Ed's lack of experience, Watt was impressed by the spirit and courage that had brought Crawford halfway across the country to meet him. Watching the young guitarist stumble through some of the unorthodox fingerings and chord structures Boon had devised, he was reminded of the days he and his buddy had spent holed away in Boon's bedroom., playing riffs to songs like "American Woman" and "Smoke on the Water" for hours on end. The look of determination in Ed's eyes as he grappled with the instrument probably seemed vaguely familiar . . .

. . . Just over two months later, with the newly crowned ed fROMOHIO on guitar and Watt and Hurley at their familiar posts, fIREHOSE played their inaugural gig. Watt broke string on the first note, and a new chapter in Pedro music had begun.

* * * *

There's a former military compound near the beach in Pedro, a wide expanse of land where huge cannons once protected the venerable harbor. Today, L.A.'s S.W.A.T. team is running through its routines in the warm California sun as fIREHOSE, cloistered in a room that measures a claustrophobic 15' x 20', rehearses a set of songs in preparation for their "Searchin' the Shed For Pliers Tour."

Since that first gig back in '85 and the release of a debut album, *Ragin' Full On* on SST later that year, fIREHOSE has emerged from the shadow of its former incarnation as a band with its own identity. Some elements remain intact, such as an occasional jazzy bent or unexpected rhythm change. But Ed's throaty warbles bear more resemblance to Michael Stipe than D.Boon, and Watt, the band's main lyricist, has edged away from Boon's straightforward political leanings in favor of a slightly more oblique poetic twist. The whole project, while retaining a certain level of minimalism and adherence to the punk ideal, is decidedly more "mersh"—Watt's slang term for commercial—than the Minutemen ever were.

"In a lot of ways, we carry on the same ideals," Watt says after the rehearsal. pulling on one of his trademark plaid shirts—this one given to him by Ed's mother. "Like getting up there and having your say whether you're good or not. The spirit was the same, the idea of people already having a fixed idea in their minds, and you having to confront that. That's how we did it in the Minutemen, not just with the hardcores, but with the Hollywooders. fIREHOSE, here we gotta go up against our Minutement people who knew us from that, and Bono, R.E.M., whatever, go up against all of that in the same way. When we were doing Minutemen, I was just thinking of getting off the stage man! 'We've gotta get trhough this, they can't run us off.' I mean, all these other people were trying to relate and stuff, and here I was thinking about surviving. In a way, *Ragin' Full On* was like that. 'Am I going to survive this?'"

They did survive it, gathering accolades from fans and critics alike. And if Watt and Hurley had any doubts as to the immediate success of fIREHOSE being a sympathetic fluke in the wake of the Minutemen's unfortunate demise, their new album, *"if'n"*, has quelled them. Where *Ragin'* featured six songs co-written by Watt and Kira (who as since become Mrs. Mike Watt) before fIREHOSE was formed, *"if'n"* is more of a team effort, with all three bandmembers sharing songwriting duties as Ed starts to really come into his own as a guitarist. Tunes ranging from "Thunder Child" (with Watt providing the growling Beefheartesque vocal) to "In Memory of Elizabeth Cotton," a lovely acoustic duet consisting solely of Ed and local female folksinger Phranc, indicate a quickly maturing group. And as of this writing, the album is firmly lodged in the #1 spot on the *College Media Journal* charts—only the third independent label release ever to do so (the other two, for trivia buffs, were the Hoodoo Gurus' *Mars Needs Guitars* in 1985 and fIREHOSE labelmates Husker Du's *Flip Your Wig* in 1986). But the band realizes there is still plenty of room for artistic growth.

"You know, we've gotta be very careful," Watt speculates, "because we are fIREHOSE. We're not Minutemen. There's no expectations, in a way. *I've* got some of Ed, but I've tried to be liberal on that, 'cause it ain't fair. 'Cause he ain't D. Boon. He didn't grow up with me, he don't know me that way. But in another way, it's kind of good, you know. He gave me a fuckin' kick in the butt. And George was always kicking me in the butt."

"Except I was kicking and missing," George retorts, chuckling.

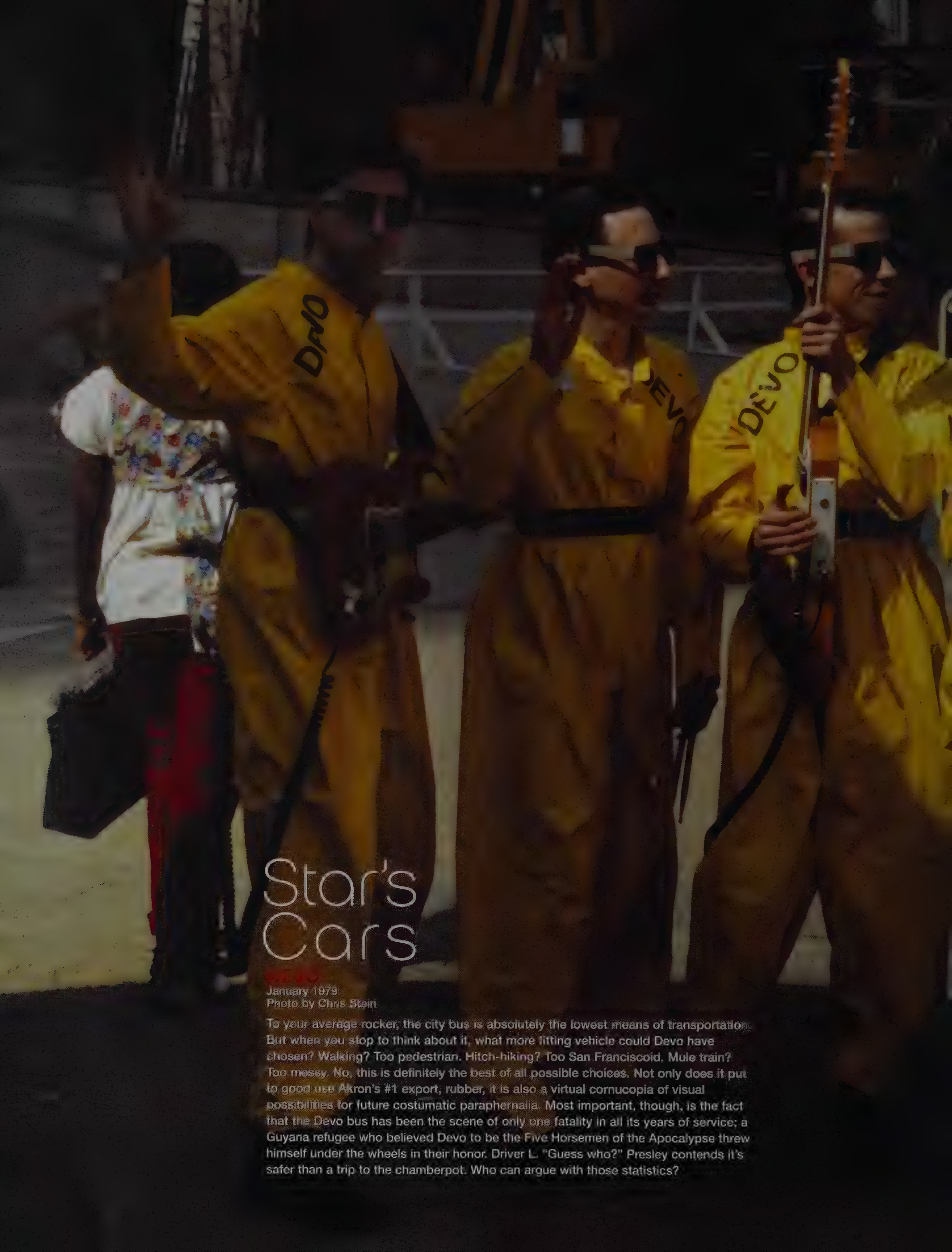
"We're missing D. Boon," Watt continues, staring at the ground. "He ain't here. In fact, it would be neat if it was a big joke and he came over here and played lead guitar. It would be great, man. But then, D. Boon would have to change his songs, too, 'cause Edward's gonna sing and he's gonna play guitar, you know what I mean?"

fIREHOSE's sense of humor harks back to the Minutemen days, when Boon and Watt first described themselves as "corndogs" in a song called "History Lesson (Part II)." The current tour (*retitled the "Little Big Tour at press time—Ed.)* was preceded by the "James Worthy Tour" (so named after the Los Angeles Lakers star forward autographed Watt's Bass), and the humorous vein penetrates songs like "Relatin' Dudes to Jazz" and *"if'n"'s* "For the Singer of R.E.M.," a riotous, on-target send up of Athens, Georgia's favorite sons . . .

". . . There's this thing in engineering, 'Build a good bridge, it won't fall down,'" Watt says. "But with art, it doesn't matter whether it will fall down. In fact, a bridge falling down might make a great piece! There was this idea, especially in the '70s, that if you just work at it, copy 'Black Dog' down, you're gonna be rewarded. The thing is, there's a million guys in line before you that get paid. So you gotta come in the side door and grab the mike.

"I don't have to worry about Eddie. This guy's got fire enough, you know. And I've got a lot of stuff I can give him, a lot of years of experience and a lot of shit. But he's in this band that's supposedly new music, on the cutting edge, and they're asking him to deliver tomorrow's sound today. And here the guy's just learning to play the guitar!

"We didn't expect to be tomorrow today. We were into tomorrow, we'll *be there* tomorrow, but I don't know if we're going to deliver tomorrow's sounds." The amiable bassist takes a swig from a large bottle of Perrier and smiles broadly. "We've still gotta figure out what we're doing!" ■



# Star's Cars

**DEVO**

January 1979
Photo by Chris Stein

To your average rocker, the city bus is absolutely the lowest means of transportation. But when you stop to think about it, what more fitting vehicle could Devo have chosen? Walking? Too pedestrian. Hitch-hiking? Too San Franciscoid. Mule train? Too messy. No, this is definitely the best of all possible choices. Not only does it put to good use Akron's #1 export, rubber, it is also a virtual cornucopia of visual possibilities for future costumatic paraphernalia. Most important, though, is the fact that the Devo bus has been the scene of only one fatality in all its years of service; a Guyana refugee who believed Devo to be the Five Horsemen of the Apocalypse threw himself under the wheels in their honor. Driver L. "Guess who?" Presley contends it's safer than a trip to the chamberpot. Who can argue with those statistics?

So CREEM was responsible in its own offhand way for putting a lot of really creative people together. As for me, CREEM probably published more of my photos than any other magazine except for Punk. Yes, the masses saw my zebra dress picture of Debbie perhaps a year before most people had any idea of what Blondie was.

—Chris Stein

# BACKSTAGE

## WHERE THE STARS TANK UP & LET THEIR IMAGES DOWN

George Harrison stopped laughing when he found out they really were from the IRS.

"If Slash buys this shirt, I can afford more beer!"

Lita Ford knows how to give good chin.

"It's alive!!!"

"You call that a chin touch?"

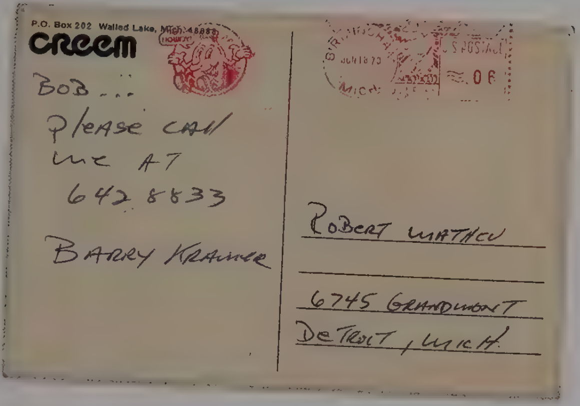
CHOOSE
DEATH
"Hey Slash, can I buy your shirt?"

"Get your chin off me!"

Not wanting to get their own hands dirty, Townshend and Ezrin hired "Killer" Cooper to do their dirty work.

ALL PHOTOS CREEM PHOTO ARCHIVE EXCEPT WHERE INDICATED

BRIAN NELSON



P.O. Box 202 Walled Lake, Mich. 48088

CREEM

Bob...

Please call
me at
642 8833

Barry Kramer

Robert Matheu

6745 Grandmont
Detroit, Mich.

# OUTRO:
# EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY AND I'M STICKING TO MINE...

It was a pretty easy transition from reading *Hot Rod* and *MAD* magazines to discovering CREEM; I found this to be true for many of my peers in the years since. I had seen CREEM at Leisure's Bookstore on Warren Avenue, at the corner of my street in Detroit. There was a time when it was on the front counter right next to *Screw*, another fine alternative double fold newspaper. And because CREEM, at least from the outside, carried the same subversive vibe as Al Goldstein's porno paper, Leisure's doubled as a bookie joint, with a phone booth that always had a waiting line, it was under that cover that I shoplifted my first copy of CREEM. It was the only way for me to get my hands on it, as they wouldn't sell it to anyone under 18. It wasn't until they started stapling it that I could buy a "legal" copy.

Leaving Cody High School and looking to enroll at Wayne State University, I wrote a letter to publisher Barry Kramer shortly after my eighteenth birthday. Having access to the first part of my inheritance, I offered to invest in the publication. Barry sent me back a Boy Howdy silver laminated postcard with his number scrawled on it with the invitation "Please Call Me." Over the next three months, I called the Walled Lake number to speak with Barry on numerous occasions, but Barry never took me up on my offer. He encouraged me to go to college instead and to keep in touch. I did squander some of that heritance on a beautiful SS Chevelle, though. Barry's reluctance to take an investment from me would raise a lot of eyebrows in the years to come, as many seemed to find it unfitting of Barry's hustler persona (when I mentioned this to Barry years later, he laughed and said he'd still take me up on it).

While pursuing an education that was intended to lead me to a career in radio, my other passion for photography took over. Due in part to CREEM, I was smitten by studying Charlie Auringer's photos from the very same concerts that I had been attending; they were magical. I had already been taking a camera to shows, but I began to watch Charlie at work—sometimes as much as the bands. I'd taken a few good photos up to that time, but Charlie's were getting printed. I needed to know more.

I first followed him and a few others backstage at an Alice Cooper concert and just made an effort to try not to be noticed. There were no such things as "backstage passes" and really no security to speak of, least not to keep hangers-on out. Some of my photos from that show have hordes of people just milling about. Very much like those scenes from Cameron Crowe's Oscar-winning love letter to that era, *Almost Famous*. A couple of months later, I followed some of the CREEM gang over to an all night after-show party with the Faces at the rock 'n' roll haven across the street from Cobo Arena, the Pontchartrain Hotel. My first real taste of decadence, the band loved to pull all of the furniture out of the rooms and hold court in the halls. It was around this time that I started to badger Lester Bangs at shows about CREEM using my photos, but he'd brush me off most of the time, occasionally asking if I had anything good and telling me to call him—but he never returned my calls.

It wasn't until 1978, after many of my photos had already been published in some NY rags, most notably *Rock Scene*, that I got my foot in the door. I was lucky enough to be the last one to leave a Lou Reed concert—the other local photogs already had their fill—when Mitch Ryder joined Lou onstage for "Rock 'n' Roll." Mitch and his Barry Kramer-managed band Detroit had covered Lou's song with great local success. The following day, I got a call from editor Susan Whitall asking about the photos, those were my first published in CREEM. It would still be some time before I got an invite to the office, although I don't remember why. I knocked on the door, asked for Sue and met Dave DiMartino on his first day of work. He hadn't a clue as to her whereabouts, but told me I could sit and wait. I watched him work from behind the haze of his menthol cigarette, writing with an occasional slug from a can of Tab. Dave and I would go on to many great adventures in CREEM world, some of which are here in these pages, most notably regarding The Clash. He's been a good pal since and a huge touchstone for me during this process celebrating CREEM.

Once I got into the thick of things with the CREEM editors, I had the unique pleasure to work closer to the editors than most photographers at the magazine ever had. I no longer read CREEM the way I had previously—I didn't have to. If they discovered a new record, I'd get turned onto it before they ever started writing about it in the magazine. It also gave me an edge in getting photos in the magazine because I knew at least a month or two in advance what they'd be writing about. When *London Calling* came out, we played it to death, and we couldn't wait for the Clash to finally come to Detroit. It was great, Dave and I showed up at sound check at Masonic and they just knew we were from CREEM—the magazine and the city were that closely associated.

Where Charlie had been an enigma early on, I came to know many of the photographers during combat in the photo pit, that magical half-realm between the band and audience (who were not always happy to stare at the back of our heads blocking the views that they had sometimes paid hundreds of dollars to scalpers for). It was always a speedball of adrenalin, the moment when lights go out and the lull before the opening chords. Whether captured or coerced, the CREEM photographer went after what they knew would intrigue the editors. Whether catching Iggy or Stiv with their pants down, or fast-talking their way backstage with Boy Howdy cans for a session, they'd do or say anything to get the shots. At most other publications, the photographer is briefed by the art director on what they want from a shoot. At CREEM it was sometimes a free-for-all, but mostly it was fun. I am proud of the all the work on these pages, not just mine, but of all the photographers who contributed so much to CREEM's legacy. I have said on many occasions that it is a collective mentality that is CREEM. It has been great revisiting those back issues and, in many cases, discovering some things for the first time.

In the issues published in the early '70s, well after the magazine started into national distribution, there ran a solicitation from the staff, next to Boy Howdy! It read:

*Do it! This is just to say we want you. That should' ve been obvious all along, of course, but just in case it isn' t here' s the deal: NOBODY WHO WRITES FOR THIS RAG' S GOT ANYTHING YOU AIN' T GOT, at least in the way of credentials. There' s no reason why you shouldn' t be sending us your stuff about film, ecology, books or whatever you have in mind that we might be able to use. Sure, we don' t pay much but then who else do you know who' ll publish you? We really will...ask any of our dozens of satisfied customers. Just bop it along to us and see what comes back your way (lots faster if you enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope). There' s really no such thing as an "unsolicited manuscript," you know, and if you have eyes to be in print, this just might be the place. Whaddya got to lose? Whaddya got?*

Many accepted that challenge, both writers and photographers alike. There is no other way to say it: what we have here is what rises to the top. CREEM.

*—Robert Matheu*
*Hollywood, Calif.*

BOY HOWDY!
33
45
33
45
Technics
by Panasonic
DIRECT DRIVE AUTOMATIC PLAYER SYSTEM
SL-1300

First off, we need to thank all of the people who made CREEM Magazine what it was in the era from 1969–'88—even the people who hate our guts. Jeffrey Morgan performed yeoman's duty in this process by writing captions, transcribing stories, and serving as an all-around utility man. Bill Holdship (or Be'o Ho'ship, as we calls him) checked our work (and checked our heads) frequently. Charles Auringer and Richard Siegel connected us to CREEM's earliest days and kept us true to the spirit of Boy Howdy! Dave DiMartino and J. Kordosh provided crucial editorial guidance (and are still *very* handsome). Mark J. Norton helped put it all in perspective in his own curmudgeonly way. We're forever grateful for the contributions of Linda Barber Roach, Richard Riegel, Bebe Buell, Alice Cooper, Iggy Pop, Ted Nugent, Chris Stein, Bun E. Carlos, Thurston Moore, Tommy Ramone, Russell Mael, Rod Stewart, Doug Fieger and Don Was.

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Special tribute must be paid to those CREEM people who are no longer with us—namely Barry Kramer, Lester Bangs, Rick Johnson, Richard Creamer, Ross Marino and Edouard Dauphin. Likewise, we still miss Rob Tyner, Fred "Sonic" Smith, Dave Alexander, Stiv Bators, Joey, Dee Dee and Johnny Ramone, and Joe Strummer (among many others).

Art Dictator . . . err, Director Greg Allen put in long hours and gracefully put up with last-minute copy changes.

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Robert Matheu would like to thank Ruby for keeping him sane and keeping his comic perspective in check, (You are the best and I am silly—RM), as well as the newest member of the gang, sister Rose. Matheu also thanks his sisters Dolores and Joanne, and brother Ron (for not grounding him when he should have been and for picking him up on the corner of Jefferson Ave and out in front of the Grande Ballroom).

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**Brian J. Bowe** is a journalist and rock historian who was the first editor of CREEM online. He began his career at daily newspapers in Michigan and New Hampshire, and his byline has appeared in countless publications, including Detroit's *Metro Times* and *Harp*. He has taught journalism at Grand Valley State University.

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Robert Matheu photograph: Stevie Ray Vaughan, 1988
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"CREEM was a 7-Eleven mag. It was like you should have read CREEM with a Slurpee. It was a nice thing." —**Iggy Pop**

"It's about time you realized that people actually BELIEVE what they read in that rock 'n' roll rag of yours." —**Pete Townshend**

"CREEM rocked as much as the bands. It was the same attitude. The staff of CREEM didn't just come to the shows to write about them, they came to rock." —**Alice Cooper**

"So what kind of readers does CREEM have? It's not just Ginger Baker, Jack Bruce, and Eric Clapton, is it?" —**George Harrison**

"I don't believe anything I read in CREEM, it and the writers just say what they want to!" —**Geddy Lee**

"If this book ever does get published, rush me my comp copy so I can sell it on eBay." —**Rod Stewart**

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